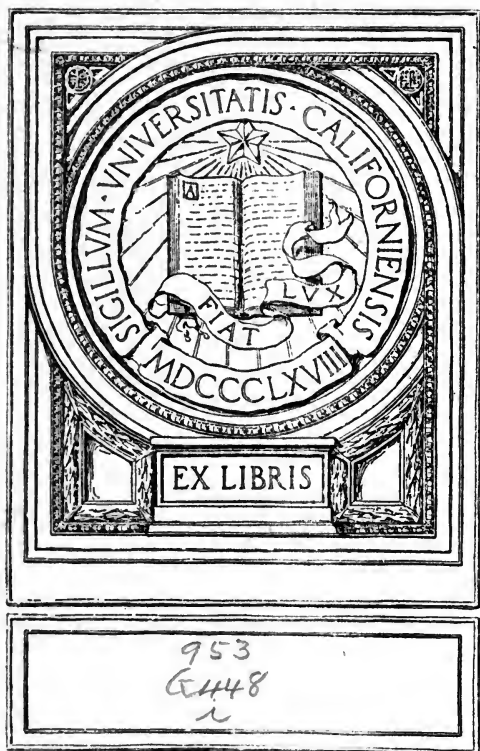


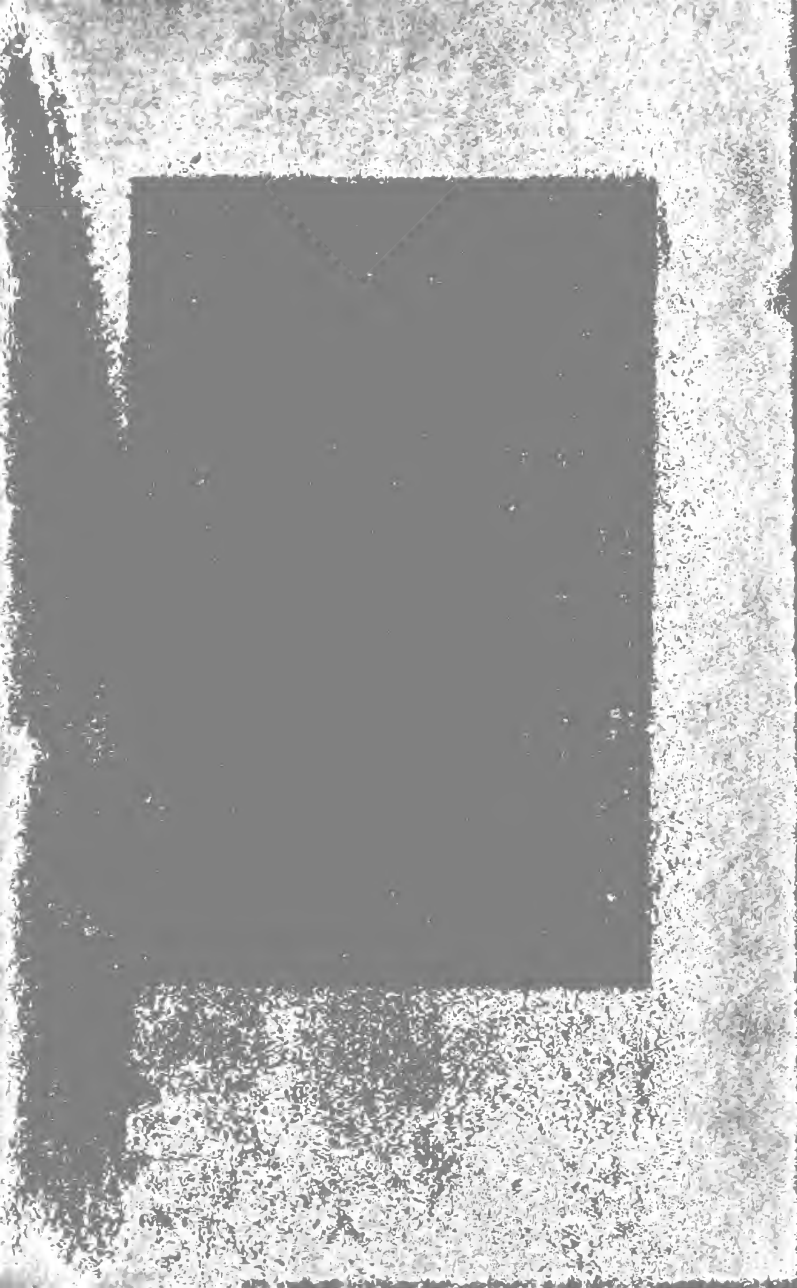


IRONBARK SPLINTERS

FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH









IRONBARK
SPLINTERS



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IRONBARK SPLINTERS

FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH

BY

G. HERBERT GIBSON

(IRONBARK)

AUTHOR OF

"IRONBARK CHIPS AND STOCKWHIP CRACKS," ETC.

SECOND EDITION



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PREFACE

THIS book does not profess to be anything but the lightest of light reading—the thistledown and cobwebs, in fact, of Australian literature. The Author does, however, claim that the local colour of the bush verses is correct, his knowledge of bush life having been derived from years of experience and hard work on sheep and cattle stations, and farms in Australia.

In addition to some new matter the book contains many of the Author's contributions to the *Sydney Bulletin* (published with the consent of the proprietors of that Journal), and a few extracts from "Ironbark Chips," a former book by the same Author, which was published by Messrs George Robertson & Co., of Sydney, New South Wales.

"IRONBARK."

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GOING ON THE LAND

THERE'S a cheerful little microbe, and it's very
much about,
And deep into your cuticle it drives its little
snout ;
It whispers and it wheedles, and delivers its
command—
“Go forth into the wilderness, and get upon the
land.”
You can hear the microbe whisper in the watches
of the night,
And it makes you discontented, though your
prospects may be bright,
Till you long to take some implements—some
shovels and some hoes—
And go out and “make the wilderness to blossom
as the rose.”

Yes, to blossom as the rose—in your folly you
suppose
You can irrigate the wilderness with thirty foot
of hose !

But you're not the only johnny whom the
microbe holds in thrall;
The townsman and the countryman, it gets into
them all;
The dude who finds a boarding-house inimical to
ease
(Who's full of "closer settlement," as practised
by the fleas);
The shearer who's been "ringing" all the
western shearing sheds;
The "dossers" who is seeking fresher fields—
and cleaner beds;
The digger who is bulging with the gold that he
has "panned,"
They are jostling each other to get settled on
the land.

They'll "*get settled*" on the land, and it's hard
to understand
Why they overheat and bust themselves to get
upon the land.

They are marchin' through the desert—an
enthusiastic band—
Each has "bluey"¹ on his shoulder and a
"billy"² in his hand,

¹ The roll of blue blankets much affected by Australian bushmen when on tramp. An English countryman on tramp carries his belongings in a bundle on a stick, an Australian rolls his in a blanket which he carries on his shoulder or on his back. The roll is called a "swag," and is often jocularly referred to as "Matilda."

² "Billy"—a tin can for making tea in when on tramp.

And they tempt you with an accent that is affable
and bland,
To chuck yer job and pilgrimise to freedom on
the land.
So you crumple up yer bluey, and you fill yer
water bag,
And you saddle yer "goanna"¹ with yer quart
pot and yer swag ;
You've got yer money stitched up in yer moleskin
trousers' band,
And you start for the horizon, "on the wallaby"²
for land.

Yes, you're goin' on the land, and you think it
will be grand,
Just a hundred miles from nowhere in a humpy
on the land.

So you wallaby and wander north and south,
and east and west,
While the sleepless little microbe keeps a-borin'
at your breast,
And a lot of beer and swankey you get called
upon to stand,
In exchange for information *re* localities and
land.

¹ In the varied vocabulary of the Australian bushman a saddle horse is often called a "goanna," an "alligator" and countless other equally inappropriate names ; "goanna" is a corruption of "iguana," the gigantic tree lizard of Australia.

² Going on tramp is called going on the "wallaby track."

But at length you get a lithograph, and go and
pick a block ;
You begin to take an int'rest in the price of wool
and stock ;
You interview an "Agent," and you pay him,
as per scale,
But that's quite another story, and we'd better
draw the veil.

Yes, we'd better draw the veil, but a spicy little
tale
Has been told about the Agent and his little
sliding scale.

You have signed your declaration—it's been
witnessed by the "beak" :
You have lodged your application, all correct
"within the week."¹
The Local Board is sitting, and you've got to
face the band
If you mean to give yourself a chance of getting
on the land.
You feel like some stray animal just landed from
the Ark,
And hope that nothing will occur the Local
Board to nark ;
You'd give your chance of heaven for a drop of
something "short,"
When the bobby stands "attention," and cries,
"Order in the Court."

¹ The week allowed by the Land Act for the *simultaneous* lodgment of applications.

But you're goin' on the land, and the music you
can stand,
If it only plays the proper tune to put you on the
land.

The Chairman looks you over, when the bobby
calls your name ;
You look as if you felt inclined to bust yerself
with shame ;
The impression that you're making isn't quite
the one you wished,
And you've got a sort of feeling that you're likely
to be dished.
Perhaps they take exception to the colour of your
nose,
And fancy you've been drinking—says the Chair-
man, "out he goes."
You find yourself disqualified, dissatisfied,
ignored,
And you curse the Crown Land Agent, and the
ballot, and the Board.

And you almost curse the land, for you feel
you've been trepanned,
And it isn't quite so easy to arrive upon the land.

But you're not the kind of person to be easily
pooh-poohed !
You're a horny-handed hustler, an' you ain't a
city dude,

So you "pack" your bloomin' turkey,¹ and you
take the northern train,
There's another sub-division, and you mean to
try again.
You've got the little microbe of the land-selectin'
craze,
You've got to know the Agent and his funny
little ways ;
You've faked your nasal organ, 'till the colour
doesn't show,
And you're game to face the Chairman, and to
have another go.

Oh ! the hunger for the land ! you've annexed
the proper brand
Of the fever for selectin' that is stalkin' through
the land.

You get into a ballot,² and you struggle out on top ;
You get a bit of desert, and you tempt it with
a crop ;
You fence it and you watch it like a pussy with
a mouse,
And you build yerself a humpy, and you fancy
it's a house.

¹ "Turkey"—bushman's slang for "swag," a bundle of blankets and clothes. The term is sometimes also applied to a pack-horse.

² Priority among conflicting applicants for Crown Lands in New South Wales is determined by ballot.

Yer bloomin' crop is poppin' up quite healthy-
like and sound,
Then the rabbit comes a-hoppin', and he eats
it to the ground,
And you find it ain't as easy as some people
might suppose
To make the blinded wilderness to "blossom
as the rose."

Oh! you've got upon the ground, where the
rabbit ramps around,
And you find you've got a longin' for a toom-
stone and a mound.

But you get another crop in, and you want to
sink a tank,
So you saddle the "goanna," and you go and
see the Bank;
And the Bank says: "Oh, yes, certainly, we'll
tow you into dock
For a mortgage of your desert, and your
implements, and stock."
Then you feel depressed and blighted, and you
think you could dispense
With the everlastin' cawin' of the crows upon
the fence;
You wonder if yer Fate includes another nasty
jar,
When a cyclone comes a-roarin' an' you dunno
where you are.

Yes, you do—you're on the land, with yer fence
half hid with sand,
And a mortgage on yer cattle, and yer
implements, and land.

Then you up and curse the land, and the
rabbits, and the sand,
And the everlastin' livin' on provisions that are
canned.

In the most impressive language that you've got
at your command,
You execrate the "Agents," and the Land Act,
and the land.

You roll your blessed bundle, and you reef your
trousers' band,

An' say you'll go and fraternise with Chinkies
on the Rand.

You stagger to the shanty,¹ and you sample
every brand

Of their soul-destroyin' liquors, and forget about
the land.

But you've been upon the land, and you've got
its Cain-like brand—

The colour of mahogany your features have been
tanned—

You've deep excoriations on your hard and
horny hand,

And your blessed heart's been busted in the
struggle with the land.

¹ Bush-pub.

MY MATE BILL¹

(JIMMY THE HUT-KEEPER, LOQUITUR)

THAT'S his saddle across the tie-beam an' them's
his spurs up there
On the wall-plate over yonder, you kin see's
they ain't a pair.
The "daddy" of all the stockmen as ever came
must'rin here—
Killed in the flamin' mallee, yardin' a scrub-
bred steer!

They say as he's gone to Heaven, an' shook
off his worldly cares,
But I can't sight Bill in a halo sot up on three
blinded hairs;
In Heaven! what next, I wonder, for strike me
pink an' blue
If I savey what in thunder they'll find for Bill
to do.

¹ Originally written by "Ironbark" for the *Sydney Bulletin*, and included, with the author's consent, in Mr A. B. Paterson's collection of Australian "Bush Songs."

He'd never make one o' them angels with faces
as white as chalk,
All wool to the toes like hoggets, an' wings
like a eagle-'awk,
To sit on a throne an' trumpet, an' 'arp like a
bloomin' bard—
He'd no more ear for anthems than calves in
a brandin' yard.

He could sit on a buckin' brumbie¹ like a nob
in an easy-cheer,
An' chop his name with a green-hide fall on
the flank of a flyin' steer :
He could show the saints in glory the way that
a fall should drop,
But sit on a throne?—not William—unless they
could make it prop !

If the Heav'nly hosts got boxed now, as mobs
most always will,
Why who'd cut 'em out, an' yard 'em, or draft
on the camp like Bill?
But to straddle a blazin' sunbeam, an' muster
a push that flew,
Is graft that a man like William 'ud skearcely
care to do.

¹ The wild scrub-bred horses in Australia are called
"brumbies."

He mightn't freeze to the seraphs, or chum with
the cherubim,
But if ever them seraph johnnies get "pokin'
it," like, at him,
Well, if there's hide in Heaven, an' silk for
to make a lash,
He'll yard the lot in the jasper lake in a blinded
lightnin' flash!

It's hard if there ain't no cattle, but p'raps they'll
let him sleep,
An' wake him up at the judgment for to draft
them goats an' sheep.
It's playin' it low on William, but p'raps he'll
buckle-to,
Just to show them high-toned seraphs what a
mallee-man kin do.

If they saddles a big-boned angel—with a turn
o' speed of course—
As can spiel like a four-year brumbie, an' prop
like an old camp horse,
If they puts Bill up with a snaffle, an' a four
or five inch spur,
An' eighteen foot o' green-hide for to chop the
blinded fur,
He'll draft them blamed angoras in a way, it's
safe to swear,
As'll make them tony seraphs sit back on their
thrones an' stare!

SEND US GIRLS

The following cable message was recently sent from Western Australia to London:—"Send us as many girls as possible—our farmers want wives."

THERE'S loud complaint from the farming men
In the Land of the sable swan,
For there isn't a wife for one in ten,
They say, and they can't get on,

Unless some vessel, with crowded decks,
Her tops'ls soon shall furl,
And land a lot of the softer sex—
A load of assorted girl.

So, send us over the salt sea foam
Some girls to sweep and scrub ;
Girls to see that we don't come home
Too late from the local pub ;
Girls to see that a bloke is fed
In a regular kind of way,
To soothe and pillow his weary head
At the end of the long, long day.

A cry from the place where the breezes fan
The "jarrah" and "yate"¹ has come,
Conveyed by the capable cable man
To the Land of the crowded slum—

To the Land where the London dude a tress
Of his waxed mustachio twirls—
And the voice says, "*pity our loneliness,
And send us a lot of girls.*"

Girls for sweethearts, and girls for wives,
And girls to milk our cows ;
Girls to brighten our lonely lives,
Or weep for our broken vows ;
Girls to attend to the hand-fed calves ;
To honour and to obey
The blokes they take for their other halves,
And, who *haven't too much to say.*

Then send us women with lots of go,
As'll see to it every day
That the roosters don't forget to crow,
Or the hens forget to lay.

Handy girls with a cookery book,
And with no dislike profound
To givin' a hand with a reapin' hook
When the harvest time comes round.

¹ Jarrah and yate—two kinds of Western Australian timber.

Girls to rise in a cheerful mood,
When they hear the "jackass"¹ laugh,
To light the fire, and cut some wood,
Or a couple o' bags o' chaff;
Girls to chivvy the ruthless crow
From the eyes of the helpless lamb,
And pedal the sewin' machine, you know,
And girls to wheel the pram.

The cry rings out of a thousand throats
In piteous minor chords,
As a hustling cablegram it floats
To the Land of the House of Lords.

It says, don't send us yer woollen goods,
The sons of yer bankrupt Earls,
Yer calico stuff, or yer patent foods,
But send us a lot of girls.

Girls for mothers, and girls for mates,
And girls for maiden a'nts;
Girls to scour the dinner plates,
And patch up our Sunday pants.
Keep the sons of yer bankrupt Earls,
Yer bacon, and cheese, and hams,
For, what we want is a *thousand* girls,
And a couple o' thousand prams.

¹ The "Laughing Jackass" of Australia—a bird of the Kingfisher tribe with a note closely resembling human laughter.

Our cabled cry has alarmed the seals
Where the billow creams and foams,
And frightened the crabs and conger eels
Asleep in their wave-washed homes.
It's travelled north to the Land o' cakes,
Where the pibroch squeals and skirls,
And it's known all over the Highland Lakes
We are hungering here for girls.

Governess, nurse, and laundry-maid,
To iron our only shirt ;
Girls to give us the best "first-aid"
Whenever we may be hurt ;
Girls to love us till Death shall pass,
And sever the marriage tie ;
Girls to give us the *coup de grâce*
Whenever we want to die.

Girls to iron, and girls to cook,
Who haven't got time to cry,
Who'll give us a sympathetic look
If we can't digest their pie.
So don't be sending us useless things,
As change for our gold and pearls,
But send us a *ton* of wedding rings,
And a hundred tons of girls.

WHEN CLUBS WERE TRUMPS

THOUGH our cavern-dwelling parent
In the days that used to be,
Knew no uses for a brush and comb, or tub,
He possessed a lot of knowledge
That is hid from you and me,
And he knew the varied uses of a club.

Though he may have been a heathen,
And a trifle rude and rough,
When we patiently investigate, we find
That, though ignorant of science
And a lot of modern stuff,
Still he knew the way to deal with womenkind.

When the prehistoric person
Woored the prehistoric maid,
He was rigorous, and rough, and often rude,
For he hadn't any manners,
And, I'm very much afraid,
That his methods might be stigmatised as
crude.

By the hair he used to grab her,
 As she scuttled through the scrub,
 And he dragged her to his cavernous retreat,
 Where he ardently caressed her
 With a hard and knobby club,
 And the sacrament of marriage was complete.

Then the voice that breathed o'er Eden
 Was the wailing of the bride—
 Plus the diapason grunting of her hub—
 As he sought the softest places
 In her cuticle, or hide,
 Which would take the best impressions of his
 club.

So, through all the later stages
 Of the cave-man's married life,
 Which could scarcely be monotonous or tame,
 He evinced consummate knowledge
 Of the way to treat a wife,
 And he always knew the way to play the game.

In the risky game of marriage
 Quite a lot of modern chumps
 Lose the "doubles," and the "singles," and
 the "rubs,"
 Just through thinking, in their folly,
 That, in marriage, hearts are trumps,
 While the cave-man always *knew* the trumps
 were *clubs*.

And his wife was meek and lowly,
And she kept within the range
Of her proper sphere, as women ought to do,
And she never searched his pockets
To relieve him of his change,
For he hadn't any pockets to go through.

She could fricassee a dodo,
She could mend a green-hide shirt—
We may take it she was never asked to
scrub—
While through all her weary struggle
With the squalor and the dirt,
She was heartened and encouraged—with a club.

She was spry, and she was active,
And assisted in the chase
When they had to "scratch the gravel" for
their grub;
But, however fleet the quarry,
Or however hot the pace,
Why, she always kept one eye upon the
club.

If he lingered till the morning
At the prehistoric pub,
And she looked at all like layin' down the law,
Well, he didn't say, "my darling,
They detained me at the club,"
But he let her have the club upon the jaw.

What a sweet, domestic picture
 Of the simple married life—
 Free from modern complications, for, of course,
 If the club was instrumental
 In the winning of a wife,
 It was quite as efficacious for divorce.

When the cave-frequenting person
 Had a yearning to be free
 From a loving wife's affectionate embrace,
 Why, a wallop with a "waddy,"¹
 Was an "absolute decree,"
 And there wasn't any "nisi" in the case.

No expensive fees to counsel,
 No anxiety of mind,
 Like petitioners, in cases of the sort,
 Feel when active co-respondents—
 Leaving unpaid costs behind—
 Skip beyond the jurisdiction of the court.

What a lot we must be missing
 In decadent latter days—
 'Spite the scientific lore of which we rave—
 For we know far less of women,
 And their management and ways
 Than the prehistoric person, in the cave.

¹ Australian aboriginal term for a stick or club.

And the modern wife who waketh,
When the early rooster crows,
And who findeth that her head is free from
bumps,
Ought to thank her stars—and garters—
As the vulgar saying goes—
That she lived not in the days when clubs were
trumps.

JONES'S SELECTION

THE KIANDRA MAN'S YARN

You hear a lot of "new-chum" talk
Of "goin' on the land,"
An' raisin' record crops of wheat
On rocks an' flamin' sand.

I 'ates exaggerated skite,
But if yer likes I can
Authenticate a case, in which
The land went on the man.

Bill Jones 'e 'ad a mountain block
Up Kosciusco way ;
He farmed it pretty nigh to death,
The neighbours used to say.

He scarified the surface with
His double-furrow ploughs,
An' eat its blinded heart right out
With sheep an' milkin' cows ;

He filled its blamed intestines up
With agricult'ral pipes,
An' lime, and superphosphates—fit
To give the land the gripes—

Until at length the tortured soil,
Worn out with Jones's thrift,
Decided as the time was come
To up an' make a shift.

One day the mountain shook itself,
An' give a sort o' groan,
The neighbours was a lot more scared
Than they was game to own.

Their jaws was dropped upon their chests,
Their eyes was opened wide,
They saw the whole of Jones's farm
Upend itself, an' slide.

It slithered down the mountain spur,
Majestic-like an' slow,
An' landed in the river bed,
A thousand feet below.

Bill Jones was on the lower slopes
Of 'is long sufferin' farm,
A-testin' some new-fangled plough
Which acted like a charm.

He'd just been screwin' up a nut
When somethin' seemed to crack,
An' fifty acres, more or less,
Come down on Jones's back.

'Twas sudden-like, a shake, a crack,
A slitherin' slide, an' Bill
Was buried fifty feet below
The soil he used to till.

One moment Bill was standin' up
A-ownin' all that land,
The next 'e's in eternity—
A spanner in 'is 'and !

They never dug up no remains
Nor scraps of William Jones—
The superphosphates eat the lot,
Hide, buttons, boots, and bones.

For this here land wot Jones abused,
And harassed in the past
'Ad turned an' wiped 'im out, an' things
Got evened up at last.

From this untimely end o' Bill
It would perhaps appear
That goin' free-selectin' ain't
All skittles, no, nor beer.

So all you cocky city coves,
Wot's savin' up yer screws
To get upon the land, look out
The land don't get on *yous*.

THE BLINDIN', BLAZIN' WEST

(By a trans-Darling swagman—probably called "Bill.")

WHEN a bushman comes to Sydney for a flutter
with 'is cheque
Why 'e 'ates to hear a city cove a-talkin' through
'is neck
Of the country, an' the stations, and of "goin'
on the land,"
'Cos 'e's talkin' on a subject as 'e doesn't
understand.

If the cove 'as bin to Narrabri, or Gunnedah, or
Hay,
Why, 'e thinks 'e knows the country in a com-
pre'ensive way ;
If 'e's bin to Bourke 'e fancies 'e's a sort o' Burke
or Wills,
Though 'is 'ome may be a ash-'ouse in the 'eart
of Surry 'Ills.¹

¹ Surry Hills, a suburb of Sydney.

THE BLINDIN', BLAZIN' WEST 25

But 'e needn't get a gassin' or a throwin' out 'is chest

Fur, if Bourke 'as been 'is limit, why 'e 'asn't seen the west—

Not the west, as bushmen know it—it's a long way further back,

An' it's tryin' "umpin' bluey"¹ up the sand-'ills on the track.

But you'll know the west is comin' when yer tongue's as big as two,

An' yer water-bag is empty, an' you've struck the "Dry Paroo."²

It's a land of perspiration, an' muskeeter-bites, an' sin,

An' it's Hell with flies an' centerpedes, an' sojer-ants throwed in.

If yer wants to go a-livin' wot they calls the "simple life"

Get a "bluey" an' a billy, an' some bacca, and a knife,

Get some dilly-bags for rations, and, perhaps, a second shirt,

An' just strike fur them there "Meadows" wot's been christened after Sturt.

¹ "Umpin' bluey"—carrying a "swag."

² Paroo, an alleged "river" in the west of New South Wales and Queensland.

They're to westward o' the Darling, an' to west
of the Paroo,
And you won't put up no records in the sand you
hustle through,
An' you can't expect the trip to be a picnic or a
treat,
But the livin' there is "simple," 'cos there isn't
much to eat.

When you've tramped from dawn till evenin' in
the blindin', blazin' sun,
When yer blistered feet is scaldin', an'
"Matilda"¹ weighs a ton,
When yer lower jaw gets droppin' in dejection
on yer chest
You'll be just about beginnin' to appreciate the
West.

You'll be 'appy with a blanket slung on coat-
straps fur a tent,
While the water from the "clay-pans" coats yer
stomach with cement,²
For the general style of livin' would exasperate
a hog
An' the tucker'd give dyspepsy to a Dresden
china dog.

¹ "Matilda"—"swag."

² Fact.

THE BLINDIN', BLAZIN' WEST 27

All the Stations you will meet with, will be few
and far between,
An' you won't get apoplectic with their generous
queeseen,
For the squatters an' selectors on them lonely
western tracks
Is as plain and unpretentious in their 'abits as
the blacks.

There's a cook on Mumble Bumble oughter be
in gaol, they say,
For 'is numerous offences in the culinary way,
An' most anything the beggar ever curried,
'ashed, or fried
Would create a revolution in an ostrich's inside.

All the crows an' the goannas gets most dread-
ful stummick-aches
Takin' chances on the fragments of the dampers
that 'e bakes,
An' no self-respectin' emus ever ventures on 'is
"cake,"
For they gets appendicitis if they eats it by
mistake.

But that Cook will get 'is gruel when they
muster in the spring,
For the stock-men 'as 'is measure, an' a green-
hide whip can sting,

An' it's rather more than likely that they'll cut
 'im into strips,
Fur *they've twisted copper wire in the lashes of their
 whips.*
They're good 'earted sort o' fellers is the stock-
men in the scrub,
But they gets a bit dyspeptic an' short tempered
 with the grub ;
Chasin' cattle through the "mulga" for a livin'
 makes 'em hard,
For it ain't all golf an' tennis runnin'
 "scrubbers"¹ to the yard.

It's a place to keep away from is the "mulga,"
 for the ants
Runs a sort o' private circus in th' inside o' yer
pants,
An' the sand-flies keeps yer scratchin', fur they've
 teeth like carpet-tacks,
An' there's nothin' seems contented but the
 camels an' the blacks.

"There's a law of compensation," says the
scientific bloke—
If 'e 'umps 'is bluey westward 'e'll be sorry that
 'e spoke—
Fur the only compensation 'e'll be privileged to see
Will be flies instead of sugar in 'is korfee and
 'is tea.

¹ "Scrubbers"—scrub-bred cattle.

THE BLINDIN', BLAZIN' WEST 29

They may say the West is 'ealthy, an' the
Doctors says they find
That it's good fur some diseases, of a pulmonary
kind,
But you might as well be dyin' of a weakness of
the chest,
As be murdered by the tucker on the Stations in
the West.

Say, you brings a pore consumptive to the
country back o' Bourke,
An' you gets 'im convalescent 'till 'e's nearly fit
to work,
An' a station-cook, with murder in 'is 'eart an'
in 'is breast,
Ups an' socks 'im with a damper wot no emu
could digest !

Wot's the good of all the trouble you've been
takin' with 'is lung
When 'e's landed in the stummick by a cook as
should be 'ung?
As for curin' 'is consumption, what in thunder is
the use,
If the beggar dies a victim to 'is outraged gastly-
joose?¹

¹ Bill probably means gastric juice, but we can't be sure as a man from across the Darling might mean anything.—AUTHOR.

THE RUSSIA OF TO-DAY

THERE are many kinds of Russias, there's the
Russia of the Stage,
Of the cables, and the fables of the "shilling
shocker's" page,
And we've often idly wondered in a desultory
way
Which on earth of all the Russias is the Russia
of to-day.

There's the Russia that we read of in our little
books at school,
Where the serfs were always groaning under-
neath an iron rule ;
Where the wolves were always howling through
the watches of the night,
And the snow was always falling, and the world
was always white.

'Twas a land of grim romances of a terrifying
kind,
Which possessed a fascination for the un-
developed mind,

And we liked the thrills of terror which came
creeping down our back,
As we read of sledging tourists with the wolves
upon their track.

How we shuddered at the horror of the reckless
race with death !
Saw the monsters' eye-balls glitter, felt their hot
and foetid breath !
And with mad excitement followed all the details
of the run,
As the driver cut the traces of the horses one
by one.

Then we sighed with satisfaction when the tale
was nearly done,
And the post-house lights were gleaming, and
the cruel race was won,
But we doubt with much misgiving, now our
hair is turning grey,
If the Russia of our childhood is the Russia of
to-day.

Take the Russia of the drama—oh ! we know
the *mise en scène*,
And the march of weary captives o'er the white
and windy plain ;
While the snowflakes blurr the landscape, and
starvation thins their ranks,
And a band of scowling Cossacks hovers ever on
their flanks.

Still this venerable drama wends and wobbles
on its way,
And the mildew of the ages gets encrusted on
the play,
And the int'rest wanes, and wanders, and
meanders round about
A proscribed and captive maiden, and a Cossack,
and a knout.

She's the idol of a highly revolutionary lot,
And she's broody as a bantam when she's
hatching out a plot,
While her father's chief ambition, as a Nihilistic
star,
Is to lodge some high explosives in the brisket
of the Czar.

But her amiable parent is a captive in the mines,
"Doing time" in expiation of political designs;
He's a picturesque old party, and he's something
of a crank,
But we always weep sincerely when we hear his
fettters clank.

Yes, we know this sort of drama, and, though
rather overdone,
It appeals to lots of people, and it always has
a run,
But, although we love it dearly still we're doubtful
in a way
If the Russia of the drama is the Russia of
to-day.

There's the Russia of the novels—it's a spacious
field indeed,
That the writer of the "shocker" has to cover
with his screed,
And he screws our expectations to the very
highest pitch,
While he thrills us with the story of Ivan
Ivanovitch.

He can scarcely overdo it, so he needn't be
afraid,
He may splash the "local colour" on the picture
with a spade,
He may spread it with a shovel, or a besom, or
a hoe,
If his paint is thick and lurid why his book is
bound to go.

He creates a charming countess, and a prince
or two, or more,
And some vodka - swilling "moojiks," and
policemen by the score,
For a moojik reeks of vodka as a sailor reeks
of tar,
And policemen swarm like rabbits, 'neath the
ægis of the Czar.

When he starts to build a countess, why he
doesn't scamp the job—
She's a dainty sort of daisy, you can bet your
bottom bob—

She's as lovely as a houri, she's as wicked as a
witch,
And she casts her roving optics on Ivan
Ivanovitch.

She has barrow-loads of lovers, and they mob
her in the street,
And the Counts, who call to see her, mostly
perish at her feet,
And Dianne, the French domestic who attends
to her boudoir,
Gets *ennuyée* sweeping fragments of her lovers
from the floor.

He constructs a few conspirators who make
things pretty hot,
And he keeps his cast a-movin' while he worries
out his plot,
And he sets 'em all intriguing 'till, with infinite
finesse,
He contrives to get the hero in a devil of a mess.

Then he brings along more women, for he
knows his way about—
Say, a maid or two of honour, and a maid or two
without—
And some Captains, and a Colonel, bronzed and
bearded—with a star—
And he makes 'em snug and social round the
steaming "samovar."

Yes, he does all this, and does it most particularly well,
 And the publishers can tell us how the "shilling shockers" sell,
 And we buy 'em, and we like 'em, but we shouldn't care to say
 That the Russia of the novel is the Russia of to-day.

But the Russia of the cables?—that's another pair of shoes,
 We get lots of vague impressions from the "specials" in the "noos,"
 And the principal impression they have given us so far,
 Is that life is too explosive in the country of the Czar.

Very hazy are the notions we have gradually gleaned
 From perusing the concoctions of the cable-grammic fiend,
 And among 'em are convictions that in Russia you will find
 There is too much "little-Father" of the *step-paternal* kind;

That a noble goes to breakfast in an armour-plated suit,
 That there's dynamite for dinner—mostly stuffed inside the fruit—

That when tired out with dodging the stilettos
and the lead,
There are bombs instead of pillows in his cosy
little bed.

That it's hard to run a paper in the country of
the Czar,
With a bobby standing sentry as you hammer
out a "par,"
While located in your office, just to see what
you're about,
Stands a grim and grimy Cossack with a sabre
and a knout.

But perhaps the leaded details in the dailies
that we see
Ain't as perfectly convincing as they're really
meant to be,
And the smallest odds in roubles we'd be dis-
inclined to lay
That the Russia of the cables is the Russia of
to-day.

Still, we've come to the conclusion that we're
better where we are,
We don't want to go selectin' in the country of
the Czar,
That's the sum of our convictions in a gen'ral
sort of way,
And that life is too exciting in the Russia of
to-day.

As for freezin' on the Dnieper, why we wouldn't
take it on,
And we'd rather "closer-settle" on the Murray
than the Don;
And, if pressed for an opinion, why, we'd rather
swig by far
From a bushman's battered "billy" than a
Russian samovar.

We would swap the finest sturgeon caught at
Nijni-Novgorod,
For the unassuming schnapper, or the modest
Murray cod,
And we wouldn't, on our honour, give a splinter
of "belar,"¹
Or an acre of Australia for the *Empire* of the
Czar.

¹ "Belar"—a species of Australian scrub.

WANTED, A NOAH

At the dawning of the ages, when old Time was
in his youth,
Says tradition—and tradition often hovers near
the truth—
When the sturdy tree of knowledge was a tiny
little bud
Came a terrifying rumour of an overwhelming
flood.

There were scoffers in those ages—their descend-
ants plague us yet—
In the Municipal Caverns of that ancient world,
they met ;
There they swarmed like flies in autumn, and
they buzzed like angry gnats,
And they yelled the old equivalents for such
remarks as “rats.”

There were sceptics in those ages—there'll be
sceptics when we're dead—
Men who never see a brick-bat, till it hits 'em on
the head,

And, when Noah rose to order, they were very
impolite,
For they called his solemn warnings "bosh,"
and prehistoric "skite."

Then he called his sons together, and they
grafted night and day,
And they felled the local timber in a lavish kind
of way,
And, before his offspring's energy had time to
cool or slump,
He had built a naval night-mare which would
give a tar the "hump."

'Course old Noah wasn't Nasmith, and his tools
were rough and rude,
And his views on ventilation have been cavilled
at as crude,
But his Ark had "beam" and "freeboard" and
was solid as a rock,
And the rain which fell in furlongs took her
nicely out of dock.

She'd an aromatic cargo—skunks and elephants
and hares,
And goannas, snakes and 'possums, cats and
dogs, and "native bears,"
But the lee-way that she gathered would have
broke a sailor's heart,
And the sea he had to sail on wasn't marked on
any chart.

And the perfume rose to Heaven, as the vessel
 pitched and rolled,
Of the miscellaneous vermin under hatches in
 the hold—
How the deuce he ever caught 'em, how he
 stowed 'em in the Ark
Is a mystery which Noah kept particularly dark.

He'd no quadrant in his cabin, he'd no compass,
 and they say
That the latitude and longitude were mostly
 washed away,
But he sailed her like a Viking and he never
 lost a cat,
And he beached her like a seaman, on the mud
 of Ararat.

But the years rolled on in thousands, and the
 Aeons came and went,
And the tree of knowledge flourished 'till beneath
 its fruit it bent,
And, though Time's grown old since Noah and
 his hooker took the mud,
Once again we hear the murmur of a devastating
 flood.

'Tis no mighty flood of waters now which
 threatens with its roar,
But a wave of yellow heathen which may break
 upon our shore,

And it isn't Arks but battleships which now
Australia lacks,
And there isn't any Noah, with his handy little
axe.

If this wave of yellow heathen rolls unchecked
upon the coast,
It will sweep away those liberties of which we
proudly boast ;
All our *lares* and *penates* it will quickly
overwhelm,
Yes, in sooth, we need a warship, with a Noah
at the helm.

But the scoffer and the sceptic stand for ever in
the way,
And they flout us as they flouted at old Noah in
his day,
And they blink like wakened owlets, for they're
blinder than the bats,
And they shriek their senseless shibboleth—their
parrot cry of "rats."

Oh ! ye guardians of our sea-board, wake and
labour while 'tis day,
Fell the trees, and lay the keelsons of your war-
ships while you may,
Build your arks of safety quickly, get them
launched, and armed, and manned,
'Ere this foul, relentless billow breaks in
thunder on the strand.

TIMES IS CHANGED

(A GROWL FROM THE OLD HAND)

WHEN first I went upon the track
In eighteen sixty four
A-shearin' sheep with Sawbie's shears
At three an' six a score,

We add a 'ard and bitter time,
An' shearers' 'uts was 'ell,
But now in some there's bedrooms like
The Metropole 'otel.

At night we played at "poker" on
The stations in the west,
While slush-lamps lit the festive scene,
An' stank like all possessed.

But now it's kerosene in lamps
A-'angin' from the ridge—
In tony 'uts, so 'elp me cats,
It's "Solo-whist," an' "Bridge!"

A shearer now's a lordly toff
Who's 'alf 'is time on strike,
While t'other 'alf 'e's chasin' graft
Upon a motor-bike.

Next thing 'e'll 'ump along the tracks,
Instead of 'is ole swag,
Pyjamas and a tooth-brush in
A blinded Gladstone bag !

They don't use Sawbie's shears no more
At three and six a pair—
They've fakes like barber's clerks employs
In town, to cut yer 'air.

While we was grimed from top to toe
With blood, an' yolk, an' tar,
They're spic an' span as blokes wot serves
Be'ind a City bar.

The times is changed a lot, you bet,
Since first I took the track ;
The places now is all "inside"
Wot used to be "out back."

You daresn't leave the stock-routes now
On runs, on no pretence ;
An' every 'alf a mile or so,
You strikes a blarsted fence.

With paddocked sheep, if tucker bags
Runs low, when on the tramp,
You 'av'n't Buckley's show to strike
A (lurid) lambin' camp.

The shepherds is all dead an' gone
(Disgusted and rebuffed),
Unless in some Museum they
Might 'ave a odd one stuffed.

"Prince-Alberts"¹ ain't the fashion now,
The shearers all wears socks,
An' runs accounts for underwear
An' banks their "beans" an' "rocks."

They never busts nor blews their cheques,
At shanties on the track—
But then the grog ain't wot it was
When first I went out back.

The western stockmen ain't the coves
That once they used to be,
They carries little 'unting crops
That wouldn't 'urt a flea.

They ain't the kind of men at all
That made the echos crack
With eighteen foot o' green-hide, when
I first went on the track.

¹ Pieces of old blanket wrapped round the feet were often used by back-block swagmen in the author's time as a substitute for socks, and were playfully called "Prince-Alberts", though why, this deponent is unable to say.

They're growin' wheat on Cooper's Creek,
They say—I 'av'n't looked—
But all the same I'm certain sure
The flamin' country's cooked.

For, though there's flashness everywhere,
An' blokes is better dressed,
The Banks owns 'alf the bloomin' runs,
The rabbits owns the rest.

The stations gives no "pints o' dust,"¹
Nor sugar, beef, nor tea,
An' Murrumbidgee-whalin' ain't
The game it used to be.

The "jumbuck's"² gone, or goin' fast—
The cockies³ 'as the pull—
An' wheat an' milkin' cows 'as took
The place o' beef an' wool;

An' me, an' all the likes o' me,
Will shortly get the sack,
For nothin's like it used to be,
When first I took the track.

¹ The pannikins of flour formerly given as a ration to swagmen on tramp were called by them "pints o' dust."

² "Jumbuck"—bush slang for sheep.

³ Small farmers in Australia are called by bushmen "cockatoos," or briefly "cockies."

THE IRON LAW

Now this is the hardest law of life,
 'Tis writ with an iron pen,
And graven deep with a chilled-steel point
 In the hearts of tortured men.

Though fruit forbid is the fruit that's best,
 In the average person's view,
And the joys we chase with the keenest zest
 Are the ones we oughtn't to.

The fruits and the deeds which seem most sweet
 In the eyes of me and you
Are ever the fruits we may not eat,
 And the deeds we may not do.

'Tis the law of Life, or the law of Death,
 We never know which or why,
But, as sure as we live and draw our breath,
 If we break the law we die !

The things we covet and wish we had—
The bubbles we fain would win—
Are some of 'em marked "unwholesome!"
"bad!"

While others are labelled "*sin*":

And the things men mostly want (we think),
They are mostly doomed to miss—
The things they never may eat or drink—
The woman they *must not kiss*.

'Tis the law of Life, or the law of Death,
Though we never know which nor why,
But, it's up to us, as the preacher saith,
To keep the law—or die!

'Twas so since ever the world began,
And it will be when we're prone
In death, and the last despairing man
Has uttered his final moan.

ON THE INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF SCANDAL

"The evil that men do lives after them."
Shakespeare.

WE observe, as we carry our bundle
Of care through this valley of tears,
That a scandal, once started, will trundle
Unchecked through long æons of years.

Though the good that we do ain't recorded,
Or ever remembered, we find
That our sins are quite sure to be hoarded
Like gold, in the thoughts of mankind,

That to suffer injustice we're fated,
And never to have a fair deal,
As a race, since the world was created,
A glance at the past will reveal.

Look at Adam—bucolic and hearty
When first he was put on the land—
Not unlike the suburbanite party
Who taketh a lantern in hand,

And walketh at night-fall and killeth
 The slug on the cabbage and rose—
 Yet they say his relations with Lilith¹
 (A minx to the tips of her toes)

Were quite shocking and highly improper,
 That's while he was having his fling,
 Though he doubtless pretended to drop her
 When Eve took him under her wing.

Though they say he talked bullocks and horses
 Whenever he went out to tea,
 If there'd been any courts for divorces,
 Well, Eve might have got her "decree";

But her reason for rather preferring,
 To file no "petition," she owned,
 Was, she'd nothing to wear at the hearing,
 And so his offence was condoned.

Condoned, yes, perhaps, but be certain
 The skeleton grinned not in vain,
 That kind friends came and lifted the curtain
 That hid it, again and again.

That each man told his *fidus achātes*,
 Each hag told her favourite minx,
 As they strolled by the banks of Euphrates,
 With whispers, and giggles, and winks.

¹Kendall calls Lilith, "the luminous leman of Adam."

The youths told the maids, and waxed merry—
We all like a yarn that defames—
And the folks on the Tigris were very
Like those on the Trent and the Thames ;

And the scandal, though ancient and hoary,
Is fresh in the minds of us all,
As when first they repeated the story
In whispers, just after the “fall.”

Take the story of Paris, the shepherd,
And Helen of Sparta and Troy,
Well, they've both been bespattered and peppered
With scandal enough to destroy

The very last remnant and rag of
A character whiter than snow
(Not that either had any to brag of,
Or boast of, as characters go).

But the point is, of course, that, though ages
Have passed since they lived their brief lives,
And annexed their fair share of the wages
Of sin, still the scandal survives.

If they did any good, it's forgotten ;
We only remember one thing,
That's the trick—most decidedly rotten—
They played Menelaus the King.

INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF SCANDAL 51

It's the way of the world, oh ! my brothers,
It's sad, but it's awfully true,
'Tis your friends, as a rule, and no others,
Who keep your shortcomings in view.

They will patiently rake in the ashes
Of scandals—rewarded at last,
If a spark, with a few feeble flashes,
Illumines some shame of the past.

They will fan every smouldering ember,
Which seems to have life in it yet,
And *the things people mostly remember,*
Are those we would rather forget.

EURYDICE NIOBE JONES

SOME poets have ventured to sing
The poetical side of the stage—
An exceedingly excellent thing
In this awfully practical age.

And writers of popular prose
In vast inexhaustible hordes
Have written, as every one knows,
The subject as bare as the boards.

The quasi-poetical scribe
Don't care for a play from the front :
No Sanctum is safe from the tribe
On a popular paragraph hunt.

They tout each theatrical type
In private, at home in his den,
With his wife and his slippers and pipe—
These fiends of the popular pen.

“ Behind ? ” yes, they like to be there,
To follow the actors about,
To hear the stage-manager swear,
To hear the stage-carpenters shout !

They suffer rebuffs and mishaps,
Get mixed up with pulleys and "guys,"
They peer into bottomless traps,
And goggle and gape at the "flies."

Say's the scribe, "There's a glamour, you know,
Round the heroes of buskin and sock"—
If he meets with an affable "pro."
He hangs like a hound to his hock ;

Sticks close like a sleuth to the chase,
Intent upon filling a tome,
And waits while he washes his face,
And puts on his coat to go home.

They can't let the actor alone,
They want to look into his life,
To know if he's any way prone
To liquor—or wallops his wife.

They enter his kitchen, forsooth,
Examine each pan and each pot,
And give us, well, sometimes the truth,
And often, indeed, what is not.

They sing of that mouldy old clown,
The life and the soul of the troupe,
Who brought the house bodily down
With the little one dying of croup.

They tell us in verse and in prose
Of the ballet girl's home in a slum ;
Of the virtuous Columbine's woes
With a hubby addicted to rum.

Of the girl who'd no time to be bad,
Who danced herself silly, she did,
Supporting an indigent dad,
An imbecile aunt, and a kid.

Of the virtuous fairy or fay,
With principles morally strong
(From a Puritan home where they pray,
And think that play-acting is wrong),

Who shrank from exposing each charm
In the glittering glare of the lights,
And shuddered with modest alarm
When first she got into her tights.

Of the priestess of opera-bouffe
Who bearded the baronet base ;
To all his advances said " pouf ! "
And flung back his pearls in his face.

An angel in tinsel and tin,
Alike without fear and reproach,
Rejecting the wages of sin,
The bracelet, the bangle, the brooch.

For ever the bards of this type
Will twang these lugubrious chords ;
We are weary of lighting our pipe
With apocryphal tales of the boards.

We'll lisp to our own little lilt
A strictly reliable lay
Of a girl who was certainly built
In a totally different way.

Eurydice Niobe Jones
Was a pantomime kicker, a star,
And Fame with a trumpeter's tones
Had brayed forth her triumphs afar.

She was fair as an angel is fair,
She was graceful, and "crummie," and sweet,
From the coils of her "property" hair
To the soles of her number two feet.

She was supple as serpents or eels,
Her song was the song of the thrush,
And the way that she kicked up her heels
Would make Mephistopheles blush.

Of virtue she hadn't a shred,
A *double-entendre* was her forte,
And she dressed, the Lord Chamberlain said,
In a way that no ballet girl ort.

She was awfully wicked, this girl—
Eurydice Jones of that ilk—
From her forehead of powder of pearl
To the tips of her tights, which were silk.

And this was her infamous creed
(To shudder one really begins)
That it wasn't worth while to be d——d
For a pitiful handful of sins ;

That it's better to go the whole hog,
If you start being badly behaved,
And to bust up the whole decalogue
Than, well, just to escape being saved !

Yet she "drew" like a plaster of pitch,
She "took" like the very best lymph,
And the poor, and the "oofy," and rich
Bowed down to the high-kicking nymph.

She'd countless encores and recalls,
And cart-loads of bouquets each night,
And the bald-headed beaux in the stalls
Leered horrible senile delight.

Like the rattle of stirrup and bit,
The crashing of sabre and hoof,
Came the storm of applause from the pit,
The roar of the gods from the roof !

The "johnnies" ceased sucking the tips
Of the canes they'd imported from France,
And grew dizzy and pale to the lips
With the whirl of her hurricane dance !

She was quite of a different stamp
To the poet's ideal, you see,
And she didn't support an old gamp
Of a bed-ridden mother—not she.

She didn't sing hymns 'twixt the acts,
But she'd blow off the froth from a pot,
And she'd pad her silk stockings with tracts
If sawdust was not to be got.

She didn't become the mainstay
Of a home that had gone to the bad,
Nor keep from rehearsal away
To coddle a "dotty" old dad.

She did none of the virtuous things
That a virtuous maiden should do—
Her fingers were covered with rings
She never bought out of her screw—

And the chorus girls cooed in the "wings"
In soft, pianissimo tones,
And whispered most scandalous things
Of Eurydice Niobe Jones.

As an Amazon, armoured in tin,
She was goodly and fair to the eyes,
But she'd "snivel" the "wages of sin"—
She'd take 'em, and *strike for a rise!*

She'd drive with a dook on a drag,
Encourage the wickedest earls,
Make eyes at a Bishop, and brag,
If you please, of her bangles and pearls!

She wasn't religious a bit,
Or shrinkingly modest, not she,
And she'd leer at a cove in the pit
In a way that was shocking to see.

She hadn't a mind, we'll engage,
That from vice and iniquity shrank,
Nor a husband employed on the stage
As a carpenter, even, who drank.

She hadn't a sweet little elf
Of a baby commencing to coo,
And she did all the drinking herself,
And did it efficiently too.

She never lay tossing at night
Intent on benevolent schemes
To stop the old man getting tight,
Or yearned—no, not even in dreams—

To save that stage-carpenter's soul
And cure him of D.T.'s and "jims,"
And wean him away from the bowl
To a diet of gruel and hymns.

Alas ! we're afraid she's a case
Of the kind they denominate hard,
And in spite of her beautiful face,
Will be shunned by the popular bard.

She's no sort of a claim, we're aware,
To be ever put into a book,
But she's got most magnificent hair,
An *impenitent* Magdalene look ;

And the Press with the public agrees,
This Corinthian column of vice
Is as naughty, of course, as you please,
But is most inexpressibly nice.

Mind, we wouldn't attempt to aver,
And we don't for a moment insist
That the model the poets prefer
Is a creature that doesn't exist.

We merely remark, and that's all,
That the girl you can back for a bit
To stagger the dude in his stall,
The mercantile man in the pit ;

As exceedingly likely to swell
The manager's pockets with "oof,"
To fetch down the whoop and the yell,
The voice of the gods from the roof,

Is the girl with the serpentine twist,
The thrush's mellifluous tones,
The "kicker" they *cannot* resist—
Eurydice Niobe Jones.

THE TIGER'S RENUNCIATION

AN ESOTERIC, ECCENTRIC, BUDDHISTICAL
BALLAD

ABDALAH HADJI BABA RAM,
Last sighted in Montana,
Deposes this gigantic cram,
And dates the lie—"Nirvana."

He tells us he's been lifted—zooks !—
By some celestial derrick,
To lofty heights among the spooks
Of Buddhists esoteric.

He claims, it seems, an Eastern name—
This liar grim and hoary—
For once a fakir he became
(Long 'ere he went to glory).

"I recollect," he says—well, there—
His lies gush forth in fountains—
"What time I roamed, a grisly bear,
Among the Rocky Mountains.

“An unregenerated bear
With no redeeming virtue ;
My aim in life to rip and tear,
And terrify, and hurt you.

“I used to gambol, gorge, and hug—
Particularly rosy
Was life—my cave was dry and snug,
And most *metempsychosy*.

“I daily gorged myself among
Romantic mountain gorges ;
The rugged precipices rung
With wild, blood-thirsty orgies.

“I’d chaw up anything—old mules,
And lumber men, and preachers,
Stage passengers, and Sunday schools,
And tramps, and State school teachers.

“I was a most abandoned bear,
Implacable in quarrels ;
All claws, and appetite, and hair—
No principles or morals.

“A bear that walked in evil ways,
For my regeneration
I’ve suffered many a weary phase
Of psychic transmigration.

THE TIGER'S RENUNCIATION 63

“ I died—what matter how, my tale
Must halt not in narration—
I sank still lower in the scale
Of animal creation.

“ And I became (naught could excuse
The course I'd been pursuing)
A Thomas cat—a London mews
Re-echoed to my mewling.

“ And such a cat ! all thickened tail,
And arching spinal column :
With agonizing yowl, and wail
I broke the silence solemn.

“ A cat with spiky hair and rough,
And glaring optics tawny,
With aspect fierce, and sinews tough,
And flexible, and brawny.

“ No pretty purring pet, ah ! me,
For laps of ancient ladies,
Or maiden aunts—apparently
A cat straight up from Hades.

“ No ‘pensive Selima,’ you see,
No Persian puss imported ;
I was a cat apart—with me
No other cats consorted.

“ In savage wrath I stalked the tiles,
And woke up ancient codgers,
And thieved, and practised artful wiles,
And dodged the boots of lodgers.

“ My soul was steeped in guilt, and, when
A brickbat bashed my brains out,
It took unnumbered cycles, then,
Of woe to wash the stains out.

“ Enough ! what boots it to recall
The steps of my progression ?
I marched through all the animal
Creation in procession.

“ Through endless cycles past and gone
I met with fresh surprises ;
My sinful soul kept plodding on
In manifold disguises.

“ I’ve been a virtuous giraffe,
A conscientious camel,
A prodigal, a fatted calf—
’Most every kind of mammal.

“ I’ve flown with wings, been armed with stings,
Unlikely to entice one ;
I’ve been a lot of nasty things,
And, now and then, a nice one.

"I've been a moral elephant
(This last by special favour),
I've been a monk, I've been a skunk
Of evil smell and savour.

"I've been a hundred guinea ram
(At shows I've taken prizes),
A fly in amber, ants in jam,
And fleas—assorted sizes.

"Methinks 'twas when I was a flea,
Again upon probation,
I first felt faintly, flutteringly,
A higher aspiration.

"Forbore to bite a clergyman
Engaged in meek devotion,
And in that holy hour began
Repentance and promotion.

"Henceforth, ascending rung by rung—
I pause not to detail here
Each step—I stood again among
The higher-class mammalia.

"Until at length, in tropic clime,
A meek, converted tiger
(Alas! there is no other rhyme)
I roamed beside the Niger.

“ Though instinct prompted me to kill,
I stifled it and hid it ;
I lived on rice, it made me ill,
But all the same I did it.

“ In meditative mood I walked,
With pious thoughts enraptured ;
Some hunters came along, and stalked
Me down, and I was captured.

“ Resistance would be wrong, they bound
And took me, tied with new rope,
A starring tour among the crowned
And uncrowned heads of Europe.

“ My influence, as time wore on,
Was felt in the arena—
Was not without effect upon
A fierce, old, black hyena—

“ And every day, as all must own,
It penetrated deeper
In every heart save one alone,
A black-browed, sullen keeper.

“ He scorned, indeed, the glorious host
Of souls in beasts embodied,
And I with poles was often most
Impertinently prodded.

" At feeding time his conduct, it's
Quite clear, could not be meaner ;
He always gave the gory bits
Away to the hyena ;

" The refuse of the slaughter sheds—
With prejudices narrow,
He flung to me—no bullocks' heads,
No shanks with lots of marrow !

" One day he turned to reach his pole,
Alas ! in all our stages
Temptations come ; in sin my soul
Sped back a dozen ages.

" Forgotten were Nirvana's host,
And all that Buddha teaches ;
I firmly grabbed the south-west coast
Of that rude keeper's breeches.

" I gripped the pants, ay, fold on fold,
Prepared for mastication,
And—let 'em go ! ah ! friends, behold
My great '*renunciation*' !

" Accepted was the sacrifice,
My soul had burst her trammels
To masquerade no more in mice,
Or Thomas cats, or camels.

“And ere one more decade was done,
Still walking circumspectly,
I stood beneath the glittering sun
A MAN, and walked erectly.

“A man—no more with claws accurst—
Could wash, and shave, and grow nails ;
A meanish kind of cuss at first,
But human to the toe-nails.

“In varied forms I rose and soared
Through long unnumbered ages—
I’ve been a valet to a lord,
And sued him for my wages.

“It matters not each varied type
From memory to fish up,
I’ve been a merchant once (sold tripe),
A bailiff, and a bishop.

“And cycles came, and cycles went,
And still I kept advancing :
In thought the days and nights I spent,
Avoided drink and dancing ;

“Shunned all festivities and fêtes,
All levity I hated,
I took no stock in syndicates,
And gravely meditated.

“ I didn't drink, I didn't smoke,
Or read such books as ' Nana,'
I never chuckled at a joke—
'Twas thus I gained Nirvana.

“ And now I sit, a favoured ghost,
Among illustrious mummies,
Or essences, a glorious host
Of imbecile old dummies.

“ We play no harps, no lutes, no cast-
Inets, no grand piana—
Safe, frozen, fossilised at last !
Nirvana ! oh ! Nirvana ! ”

MORAL PHILOSOPHY FOR LITTLE FOLKS

LITTLE grains of rhubarb,
Spatula'd with skill,
Make the mighty bolus
And the little pill.

Little pence and half-pence,
Hoarded up by stealth,
Make the mighty total
Of the miser's wealth.

Little trips to Randwick,
Taking six to three,
Make the out-at-elbows
Seedy swells we see.

Little spree on oysters,
Bottled stout and ale,
Lead but to the cloisters
Of the gloomy gaol.

Little tracts and tractlets,
Scattered here and there,
Lead the sinner's footsteps
To the house of prayer.

Little bits of paper,
Headed I.O.U.,
Ever draw the Christian
Closer to the Jew.

Little chords and octaves,
Little flats and sharps,
Make the tunes the angels
Play on golden harps.

Little bouts with broom-sticks,
Carving forks and knives,
Make the stirring drama
Of our married lives.

Little flakes of soap-suds,
Glenfield starch, and blue,
Make the saint's white shirt-fronts
And the sinner's too.

Little tiny insects,
Smaller than a flea,
Make the coral islands
In the southern sea.

Little social falsehoods,
Such as "Not at home,"
Lead to realms of darkness
Where the wicked roam.

Likewise little cuss words
Such as "blast," and "blow,"
Quite as much as wuss words
Fill the place below.

A BALLAD OF QUEENSLAND¹

“OVER-LANDING”² JIM APOSTROPHISETH HIS
QUONDAM MATE, WHO HATH MADE HIS PILE,
AND GONE HOME.

OH! don't you remember black Alice, Sam
Holt,
Black Alice so dusky and dark—
That Warrego “gin” with the straw through
her nose,
And teeth like a Moreton Bay shark?
The villainous sheep-wash tobacco she smoked
In the gunyah down there by the lake;
The grubs that she gathered, the lizards she
stewed,
And the “damper” you taught her to bake?

¹ Originally written for the Sydney *Bulletin*, and included, with the author's consent, in Mr A. B. Paterson's collection of Australian “Bush songs.”

² Cattle drovers are called “over-landers” in bush parlance.

Oh ! don't you remember the moon's silver sheen
On the Warrego sand ridges white !

And don't you remember the scorpions and
things

We found in our blankets at night?
The wild trailing creepers, the bush buds, Sam
Holt,

That scattered their fragrance around ;
And, don't you remember that chest-foundered
colt

You sold me and swore he was sound?

They say you've ten thousand per annum,
Sam Holt,

In England, a park, and a drag,
And p'raps you've forgot you were six months
ago

In Queensland a-humping your swag.
Who'd think, now, to see you a-dinin' in state
With lords, and the devil knows who,
You were "flashin' your dover"¹ six short
months ago

In a lambin' camp on the Paroo?

Say, don't you remember that fiver, Sam Holt,
You borrowed so frank and so free,
When the publicans landed your fifty-pound
cheque

In Tambo, your very last spree?

¹ Taking pot luck with a sheath knife.

Luck changes some natures, and yours, Sammy
Holt,
'Ain't a grand one as ever I see,
And I guess I may whistle a good many
tunes
'Fore you'll think of that fiver, or me.

Oh! don't you remember the cattle you
"duffed,"
And yer luck at the Sandy Creek "rush,"
The "poker" you played, and the "bluffs"
that you bluffed,
And yer habit of holdin' a "flush"?
Perhaps you've forgotten the pasting you got
From the "Micks" down at Callaghan's
store,
When Pat Flanagan found a fifth ace in his
hand,
And you'd raised him his pile upon four!

You wer'n't quite the cleanly potato, Sam
Holt,
And you hadn't the cleanest of fins;
But you lifted your pile at the Towers,¹ Sam
Holt,
And that covers most of your sins.

¹ Charters Towers.

When's my turn a comin'? Well, never,
perhaps,

And it's likely enough yer old mate
'Ll be "humping his drum"¹ on the Warrego
banks

To the end of the chapter of Fate.

¹ Carrying his swag.

ECHO VERSES

SOME years ago I chanced upon a magazine article containing a dissertation upon a now almost obsolete kind of versification, much affected by Ben Jonson and some of the earlier poets, in which the first two or three lines of each verse ask a question, and the echo of the concluding words gives an answer more or less appropriate. An amusing example was given in the article above mentioned, which was equally rough on the great violinist of the past and his audience, thus :

“What are they who pay six guineas
To hear a string of Paganini’s?”

(Echo) “*Pack o’ ninnies!*”

I read this and a few other examples, and was straightway stricken with a desire to emulate this eccentric and somewhat difficult species of versification, and now with every apology for the crudeness of the effort, I lay my attempt before the reader.

The following echo verses are not on any account whatever to be understood as reflecting on the present or on any past Government in Australia. They are merely to be taken as shadowing forth a state of things possible in the remote future when the franchise has been extended a little further so as to include paupers, convicted criminals, and incurable lunatics.

WHAT AN ECHO TOLD THE AUTHOR

AUTHOR, *musings*:

OUR land hath peace, prosperity and "rhino,"
And Legislators true, and staunch and
tried—

What trait have they, that is not pure—divine,
oh?

(Echo interposing) "*I know!*"

What is it, if thus closely thou hast pried?

"*Pride!*"

If thus into their hearts thou hast been prying,
Thy version of the matter prithee paint;
Tell us, I pray, on what are they relying?

"*Lying!*"

I thought their honour was without a taint—

"*'Tain't!*"

WHAT AN ECHO TOLD THE AUTHOR 79

Have they forgotten all their former glories?

Their virtue—what hath chanced its growth to
stunt?

Oh! wherefore should they change their ancient
mores?

“More ease!”

What weapon makes the sword of Justice
blunt?

*“Blunt!”*¹

Thou wouldst not speak thus, wert thou now
before 'em:

Why do I heed, why listen to thy tale?

Canst purchase, then, the honour of the
Forum?

“For rum!”

And what would blind Dame Justice with her
scale?

“Ale!”

Beware! the fame of Senators thou'rt crushing!

Too flippantly thou givest each retort.

What are they doing while for their shame I'm
blushing?

“Lushing!”

And drinking?—pray continue thy report—

“Port!”

¹ Coin.

Curse on these seeds of death, and those who
sow them ;

But there's another thing I'd fain be told—
What of the masses, the canaille below them ?

"B-low them !"

Thou flippant one ! how is the mob consoled ?

"Sold !"

Now, by stout Alexander's mighty sword, or
Say, rather, by his Holiness the Pope !

By what means keep they matters in this order ?

"Sawder !"

With what do they sustain the people's hope ?

"Soap !"

Have they indeed no passing thought, no care or
Concern of what for safety should be done ?

What brought about this modern Reign of
Terror ?

"Error !"

Is there no hope for thee, my land, mine own ?

"None !"

Base love of liquor, ease, and lucre, this it

Must be which coileth round her, link on link ;
Dark is her hope, e'en as the grave we visit !

"Is it ?"

Of what black illustration can I think ?

"Ink !"

WHAT AN ECHO TOLD THE AUTHOR 81

Alas my country ! shall I not undeceive her ?

Shall I not strike one patriotic blow ?

I'd help her had I but the means, the lever—

“ Leave her ! ”

May we not hope ? speak, Echo, thou must
know—

“ No ! ”

Then shall be heard—when, round us slowly
creeping,

Shall come this adverse blast to fill our sails—

Instead of mirth, while hope aside 'tis sweeping—

“ Weeping ! ”

Instead of songs in praise of New South
Wales.

“ Wails ! ”

THE following ballad suggested itself to the Author while in the remote interior, and suffering from a severe attack of indigestion, he having rashly partaken of some damper made by a remorseless and inexperienced new-chum. Those who do not know what ponderous fare this particular species of bush-luxury is, when ill-made, may possibly think the subjoined incidents a little over-drawn.

If a somewhat gloomy atmosphere be found pervading the narrative, it is to be attributed to the fact that all the horrors of dyspepsia shadowed the Author's soul at the time it was written, and, if further extenuation be required, it may be stated that he had previously been going through a course of gloomy and marrow-freezing literature, commencing with Edgar Poe's *Raven* and winding up with the crowning atrocity (or *albatrossity*) which saddened the declining years of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*.

THE SHEPHERD'S VENGEANCE

FYTTE THE FIRST

THE squatter kings of New South Wales—

The squatter kings who reign

O'er rocky hill, and scrubby ridge,

O'er swamp, and salt-bush plain—

Fenced in their runs and coves applied

For shepherding in vain.

THE SHEPHERD'S VENGEANCE 83

The squatters said that closed should be
To tramps each station-store ;
That parties on the "cadging suit"
Should ne'er have succour more ;
And when Bill the shepherd heard the same
He bowed his neck and swore.

Now, though that ancient shepherd felt
So mad he couldn't speak,
No sighs escape his breast, no tears
From out his eyelids leak,
But he swore upon the human race
A black revenge to wreak.

He brooded long, and a fiendish light
Lit up the face of Bill ;
He saw the way to work on men
A dark and grievous ill,
And place them far beyond the aid
Of senna, salts, or pill.

He hied him to his lonely hut
By a deep, dark lakelet's shore ;
He passed beneath its lowly roof—
He shut and locked the door ;
And he emptied out his flour bag
Upon the hard clay floor.

Awhile he eyed the mighty mound
With dark, malignant zeal,
And then, a shovel having found,
“Their fates,” said he, “I’ll seal ;”
And he made a “damper” broad and round
As a Roman chariot-wheel.

He soddened it with water drawn
From out that black lagoon,
And he smiled to think that those who ate
A piece of it would soon
Be where they’d neither see the light
Of sun, nor stars, nor moon.

For, when that damper came to be
Dug from its glowing bed,
Its fell specific gravity
Was far o’er gold or lead,
And a look of satisfaction o’er
That shepherd’s features spread.

FYTTE THE SECOND

The shepherd sat by the gloomy shore
Of the black and dark lagoon ;
His face was lit, and his elf-locks hoar
By the rays of the rising moon.

THE SHEPHERD'S VENGEANCE 85

His hand was clenched, and his visage wore
A deadly frown and black,
And his eye-balls glare, for a stranger fair
Is wending down the track.

* * * * *

The shepherd hath bidden the stranger halt
With courtesy and zeal,
And hath welcomed him to his low roof-tree,
And a share of his evening meal.

As the fare he pressed on his hungry guest,
And thought of its deadly weight,
With savage glee he smiled for he
Imagined his after fate.

* * * * *

The stranger hath eaten his fill, I ween,
Of that fell and gruesome cake,
And hath hied him away in the moonlight's
sheen
For a stroll by the deep, dark lake ;

For he thought he'd lave each stalwart limb
In the wavelet's curling crest,
And take a dive and a pleasant swim
'Ere he laid him down to rest.

The coat that covered his ample chest
On the lakelet's marge he threw ;
His hat, his boots, and his flannel vest,
And his moleskin trousers too.

He hummed a tune, and he paused awhile
To hear the night-owl sing :
His ears were cocked, and his palms were
locked,
Prepared for the final spring.

An unsuspecting look he cast
At the objects on the shore—
A splash ! a thud ! and beneath the flood
He sank to rise no more !

The shepherd saw from his lonely hut
The dread catastrophè ;
A notch on a withered stick he cut—
“That’s number one,” said he,

“But, if I live ’till to-morrow’s sun
Shall gild the blue-gum tree,
With more, I’ll stake my soul, that cake
Of mine will disagree.”

Then down he sat by his lonely hut
That stood by the lonely track,
To the lakelet nigh, and a horse came by
With a horse-man on his back.

And lean and lank was the traveller’s frame
That sat on that horse’s crup :
’Twas long I ween since the wight had seen
The ghost of a bite or sup.

"Oh ! give me food !" to the shepherd old
 With plaintive cry he cried ;
 A mildewed crust or a pint o' dust ¹
 Or a mutton cutlet fried.

"In sooth in evil case am I,
 Fatigue and hunger too
 Have played the deuce with my gastric juice,
 It's 'got no work to do.'

"I've come o'er ridges of burning sand
 That gasp for the cooling rain,
 Where the orb of day with his blinding ray
 Glares down on the salt-bush plain.

"O'er steaming valley, lagoon, and marsh
 Where the sun strikes down 'till, phew !
 The very eels in the water feels
 A foretaste of a stew.

"I hungered long till my wasting form
 Was a hideous sight to view ;
 But fit on a settler's fence to sit
 To scare the cockatoo.

"My hair grew rank, and my eyeballs sank
 'Till—wasted, withered, and thin—
 The ends and points of my jarring joints
 Stuck out through my parched up skin.

¹ Flour.

“Shrank limb and thew, ’till at length I grew
As thin as a gum-tree rail ;
At the horrid sight of my hideous plight
Each settler’s face turned pale :

“And as I travelled the mulga scrubs,
And forced a passage through
I scared the soul of the native black
A-gathering his ‘nardoo.’

“On snake or lizard I’d fain have fed,
But piteous was my plight,
And the whole of the brute creation fled
In horror at the sight.

“Scrub turkeys, emus, I appal ;
Their eggs I longed to poach,
But they *collared their eggs, their nests and all,*
And fled at my approach !

“And the ‘possums ‘streaked’ it up the trees,
And frightened the young gallārs,
And all the hairs on the native-bears
Stood stiff as iron bars !”

The shepherd came from his low roof-tree,
And gazed at the shrunken wight ;
He gave him welcome courteously,
And jested at his plight.

He led the traveller 'neath his roof,
And gazed in his wan, worn face,
Where want was writ, and he bid him sit
On an empty "three-star" case.

And a smile of evil import played
On the face of ancient Bill
As some of the damper down he laid,
And bid him take his fill.

With mute thanksgiving in his breast
The food the stranger tore ;
Piece after piece he closely pressed
Down on the piece before.

And then—his heart fresh buoyed with hope—
Essayed to mount his steed,
But the horse shut flat as an opera-hat
With the weight of his master's feed ;

And horse and man sank through the sod
Some sixty feet or less !
No crust, I swear, of the Earth could bear
The weight of the gruesome mess !

Then the shepherd grinned with a grizzly grin
As he notched his stick again ;
The night passed by, and the sun rose high,
And glared on the salt-bush plain.

Two "gins" set forth in a bark canoe
To traverse the gloomy lake,
And he bid them take enough for two,
For lunch, of the deadly cake.

Enough for two ! 'twas enough, I ween,
To settle the hash of four,
For the barque o'er-flowed with the crushing
load—
They sank to rise no more.

And ever his fiendish lust for blood—
His thirst for vengeance grows ;
In sport he threw a crumb or two
To the hawks and carrion crows ;

And as they helpless, fluttering lay,
His eldrich laughter rings ;
One crumb to bear through the lambent air
Was past the power of wings.

Beside his door he sat 'till noon
When a bullock-team came by ;
The echoes 'round with the whips resound,
And the drivers' cheery cry.

Upon the dray a piece he threw
No bigger than your hand,
Of the cursèd thing, 'twas enough to bring
The bullocks to a stand.

And, though they bend their sinewy necks
 'Till red with their crimson gore,
 And fiercely strain yoke, pole, and chain
 With savage, muttering roar,

The wheels sank down to the axle-tree—
 Through the hard baked clay they tore,
 And a single jot from out that spot
 They shifted never more.

Then the shepherd called to the drivers, "Ho!
 My frugal meal partake,"
 And, though they ate but a crumb or two
 Of the fell, unholy cake,

Down, down they sank on the scorching track,
 Immovable and prone,
 And *steel blue ants crawled up their pants,*
And ate them to the bone!

* * * * *

For days by his lonely hut sat Bill,
 The hut to the lakelet nigh,
 And he wrought his dark revengeful will
 On each traveller that came by.

And he eats nor drinks meat, bread, nor gruel,
 Nor washes, nor combs, nor shaves,
 But he yelled, and he danced a wild pas seul
 O'er each of his victims' graves.

Three weeks passed by, but his end was nigh—
His day was near its close,
For rumour whispered his horrid deeds,
And in arms the settlers rose.

They came, hinds, shepherds, and shearers too,
And squatters of high degree ;
His hands they tied, and his case they tried
'Neath the shade of a wilga tree.

They sentence passed, and they gripped him
fast,
Though to tear their flesh he tried ;
His teeth he ground, but his limbs they bound
With thongs of a wild bull's hide.

They laid him down on a " bull-dog's " nest,
For the bull-dog ants to sting ;
On his withered chest they pile the rest
Of the damnèd, cursèd thing.

They gather round and they stir the ground
'Till the insects swarm again,
And the echoes wake by the gloomy lake
With his cry of rage and pain.

O'er his writhing form the insects swarm—
O'er arm, o'er foot, and leg ;
The damper pressed on his heaving chest,
And he couldn't move a peg.

THE SHEPHERD'S VENGEANCE 93

'Till eve he lay in the scorching heat,
And the rays of the blinding sun,
Then the black - ants came and they soon
complete
What the bull-dogs have begun.

'Tis o'er at last, and his spirit passed
With a yell of fiendish hate,
And down by the shore of that black lagoon,
Where his victims met their fate—

Where the "bunyip" glides, and the inky tides
Lip, lap on the gloomy shore,
And the loathsome snake of the swamp abides,
He wanders ever more.

And when the shadows of darkness fall
(As hinds and stock-men tell)
The plains around with his howls resound,
And his fierce, blood-curdling yell.

The kangaroos come forth at night
To feed o'er his lonely grave ;
Above his bones with dismal tones
The dingos shriek and rave :

And when drovers camp with a wild-mob there
They shiver with affright,
And quake with dread if they hear his tread
In the gloom of the ebon night.

KING BILLY'S CONVERSION

KING BILLY was a myall black
Of very early type,
He never used a handkerchief
His royal nose to wipe ;
And he wore no sort of clothes at all
Except a short clay pipe.

He had no sceptre and no crown,
Or anything of worth,
But he'd paint and grease himself and stalk
The land that gave him birth,
As proud as if he owned the lot
From Moreton Bay to Perth.

His palace was a gunyah, built
Of boughs and bark of trees ;
It smelt of fish and 'possum-skins,
And dogs, and swarmed with fleas ;
And so did Billy and his gin—
Her Highness, if you please.

He never, like some husbands, wore
His hat and boots to bed ;
But he'd lots of quaint domestic ways
And playful tricks instead,
And he used to bang his "lubra"¹ with
A "yam-stick" on the head.

He loved to hurl his boomerang—
His simple joys were few—
He mercilessly massacred
The "old man" kangaroo,
And knocked from off the highest trees
The screeching cockatoo.

He snuffed the desert breezes like
The poet's "Arab steed"—
Though rankest fumes of "Barrett's twist"
He much preferred—indeed
On snakes, and almost anything,
His Majesty would feed.

He loved, a very long way off,
The battle's noisy din,
When "nullah nullah" blows were struck
About some erring gin ;
But 'possums, grubs, and carpet-snakes
He simply revelled in.

¹ Australian aboriginal women are called "gins" and "lubras."

He loved the forest free—the scent
Of wattle and of gum—
But, better far than all, he loved
His senses to benumb,
And fill his royal person to
The teeth with Queensland rum.

He used to shock the mission folks ;
The missionary's spouse
The monarch's sense of modesty
Attempted to arouse,
But she didn't meet with much success
As every one allows.

The Reverend Blobs, he merely yearned
King Billy's soul to save ;
His wife's supreme ambition was
To teach him to behave
With decency—wear pantaloons,
And wash, and comb, and shave.

She thus resolved, although, of course,
She knew she had her work
Cut out, to make him “titivate,”
And dress, and come to kirk—
An edifice the King was wont
Persistently to shirk.

'Twas thus that at the mission-house
Arose a friendly strife,
Each seeking to induce the king
To change his mode of life,
A Christian feud sprang up betwixt
The parson and his wife.

They oft discussed the means of grace
For this most graceless dog ;
And, touching these same ways and means,
They often came to log-
Gerheads, for Blobs had faith in prayer,
His wife had faith in "prog."

So, woman-like, she first attacked
The monarch's weakest part
(She felt convinced he'd neither soul,
Nor conscience, mind, nor heart),
And she invoked the goddess of
The culinary art.

She tempted him with promises
Of "budgerees tuck-out"—
That's "pigeon-talk" for pigeon pie,
Roast goose, and bottled stout,
And caviare, and all that gives
An alderman the gout.

She tempted him with choice preserves
Of apple, peach, and plum ;
And Stilton cheese and tinned sardines—
She even promised rum ;
If he to church next Sabbath-day
(Full-dressed, of course) would come.

Then Billy murmured “budgerie,”
And “yohi,” meaning “yes” ;
He promised Christianity
In future to profess,
And, for his stomach’s sake, adopt
The vanity of dress.

Then Mrs B. was filled with glee,
Her breast with triumph throbs,
She sent the king a stove-pipe hat—
The kind that’s worn by nobs—
Coat, vest, and pants that once adorned
The sainted form of Blobs.

It’s true that Blobs’s pantaloons
Were thinned with fervent prayer—
He’d sat them into holes behind,
And almost everywhere—
But she patched, and darned, and thought they’d
fit
The monarch to a hair.

When Billy saw the parson's slops,
He didn't like the same,
For he knew he'd have an awful job
To fit them on his frame,
But he thought of "budgereee tuck-out"
And rum—and courage came.

He thrust his arms right through the legs
Of Blobs's pants at first,
Then tried to button them behind
His neck until they burst;
Then, over all, he tried to put
The coat, and failed, and curst.

He couldn't make things meet before,
Nor fasten right behind;
His savage limbs were ne'er before
So cabined, cribbed, confined,
And so, the monarch's wrath was roused,
With fury he was blind.

He wrenched his sinewy arms from out
The missionary's bags;
Unwound the coat-tails from his legs,
And tore the lot to rags,
And hurled them in the river-bed
Among the rocks and snags.

'Twas Sunday morn—the clang of bells
Upon the air arose—
The pious Blobs walked forth to preach
(His mind in calm repose),
Nor dreamt that in the scrub the king
Was wrestling with his clothes.

The settlers churchward wend their way,
In prayer to bend their knees ;
The music of the mission bell
Was borne upon the breeze,
And smote upon the monarch's ear
Amid the mulga trees.

He heard—and, jamming on his head
The missionary's tile,
Stalked calmly to the mission-house,
And, with a tranquil smile
Of smuggest self-complacency,
Meandered down the aisle.

The missionary's daughter was
About to play the symph-
Only ; you'd really think they'd tried
To vaccinate the nymph,
And used some efficacious kind
Of dynamite for lymph.

She got a glimpse of Billy from
 The corner of her eye ;
 She bounded from the music-stool
 Three feet or so on high,
 And fainted in some person's arms
 Who happened to be nigh.

The panic-stricken worshippers
 Took several kinds of fits ;
 Some draw their robes of righteousness
 Around themselves and "gits,"
 And some, in stolid wonderment,
 Within their sittings sits.

Then, with a rush, through exit doors,
 They all commenced to cram ;
 Saints jostled sinners in the aisle—
 The non-elect said "dam" ;
 And Billy stood there all the while
 As solid as a clam.

Describe, indeed, that wild stampede,
 I can't, 'twould fill a tome,
 For no one ever seemed to know
 How he or she got home—
 Except the king, and supperless,
 The bush he had to roam.

For weeks, within the mission-house,
There was domestic strife ;
The missionary wept and prayed—
The missionary's wife
Has had enough of royalty
To last her all her life.

Of civilising talents she
May be a little vain,
She may try them on a Cossack, or
A brigand chief from Spain,
But she'll never try to civilise
A myall black again.

THE LITERARY HERO OF THE SPICY NOVELETTE

I CANNOT write in "flowing style" or wield a
"mobile pen"—

To use the cant of books that rant of literary
men—

I cannot "dash off" poetry, and often have
regrets

That I'm not like the writers they describe in
novelettes.

They always have ideas of the most attractive
brand,

And flinty-hearted editors just take 'em by the
hand,

And load 'em up with whisky and Egyptian
cigarettes,

While they write their way to glory—that's the
way in novelettes.

Oh! the shilling novelette! I must own I've got
a "set"

On the preternatural pressman of the shilling
novelette.

The literary hero's pen runs like an auto-car,
In quickest time he "jerks" a rhyme or "fakes" a comic par ;
Collectors prize his signature — he laughs a scornful laugh
As with his auto - mobile pen he pens his autograph.
It doesn't matter what he writes, or how he slings it out,
Or whether it's in prose or verse, or what it's all about ;
It always knocks the public, and with shekels fills the net
Of the Admirable Crichton of the silly novelette.
Oh ! the silly novelette ! Just the greatest fraud I've met,
Is that quill - propelling person in the silly novelette.

He writes an ode at six years old that takes the town by storm ;
At twelve attains the highest planes of literary form,
And editors of magazines crawl half across the town
To beg a page of priceless "screed," and plank their guineas down.

He climbs Fame's ladder at a bound or two, the
 novels say,
 (Of course, for he's a "bounder" too—but that
 is by the way).
 But how the public eulogise, and how the critics
 pet,
 The literary bounder of the spicy novelette !
 Oh ! the spicy novelette ! I've a very heavy debt
 Which I mean to settle some day with the spicy
 novelette.

He never drinks, but often "quaffs" ambrosial
 kinds of brews,
 Which stimulate his mighty brain and brace his
 "giant thews" ;
 He "sinks upon" an Eastern lounge, and
 elevates his shoes,
 And "dashes off" a leader for the local "*Evenin'*
Noos."
 He has some giddy orgies, but he never knocks
 about
 With ordinary journalists who swallow pints of
 stout ;
 You always find him moving in the very highest
 sets,
 The joyous, jim-jam journalist of lying novelettes.
 The misleading novelette ! Its perusal doth
 beget
 In my bosom grave suspicions of the specious
 novelette.

He's got a "marble brow," of course, upon a
life-long lease ;
He's mostly half a London dude and half a god
of Greece—
To read about his "thews of steel," all gathered
in a lump,
It gives an unsuccessful scribe the biggest kind
of hump,
He always grabs the girl that's got most beauty,
brains, and "rocks" ;
He takes her to the theatres in very low-cut frocks ;
He has a truly gaudy time among the girls, you
bet,
The petted, pampered pressman of the giddy
novelette.
Oh ! the giddy novelette with our virtue doth
coquette—
It's really hardly proper to peruse the novelette.

He's always got a wondrous work—a book!—
upon the stocks ;
He reads each thrilling passage to the girl that's
got the "rocks."
She prophesies his deathless fame and flops upon
his heart—
Though brainy, she's quite usually a giddy kind
of "tart"—
And when his "book" at last comes out—oh,
then—well I should smile!—
The way they advertise his stuff it makes me
green with bile.

They drag it from the linotype and sell it dripping
wet—

A million copies! Rights reserved!—Oh, d—n
the novelette!

Oh! the ghastly novelette! Jumping wild, I own,
I get

With the weird, abnormal genius of the awful
novelette.

THE GIRL OF THE - DAY - BEFORE - YESTERDAY

SOME bard's been shedding a scalding tear
O'er the dead, cold ashes of "yester-year"—
A sort of figure of speech, you know,
For the frozen corpse of the long-ago—
He tunes his wail in a doleful key,
And he tries to prejudice you and me
In a mean and a pessimistic way
'Gainst all that's bright in the world to-day.

He claims in a general way, you see,
That nothing's as good as it used to be,
That all his poetical soul holds dear
Went out with the days of "yester-year,"
That naught will now with those days compare,
When men were gallant, and maidens fair—
But, what's the matter, we humbly pray,
With the girl of the-day-before-yesterday?

Say, isn't she fixed with a "shell-like ear,"
As small as those others of "yester-year,"
And ain't she fitted with eyes as bright,
And isn't her cuticle just as white?

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And hasn't she gotten a "chiselled nose,"
And cheeks as red as the "damask rose"?
Or, if she hasn't, why rouge ain't dear—
It's as cheap as it was in "yester-year."

Her dainty waist is as small, you know,
As those of the maids of long ago,
And still some lover, on some pretence,
Discovers its true circumference—
Of course it's the same old pantomime
The cave-man played in the dawn of time—
And the vows he vows are the same to-day,
And he keeps 'em much in the cave-man's way.

The girl of the-day-before-yesterday,
Can wheedle a man in the old, old way ;
Her lips are sweet, and they cling to you
In the same old way that they used to do,
And the bard is blind, and his eyes are blear,
If he thinks that the maids of "yester-year"
Can give any (adjective) points away
To the girl of the-day-before-yesterday.

But what of the wives of "yester-year"?
We can well believe they were sweet and dear,
And that, when their hubbies a-sleeping lay,
They searched their clothes in the old, old way.
But odds in shillings we'd like to lay,
That the wife of the-day-before-yesterday
Can sweep your pockets as clean and clear
As her ancestresses of "yester-year."

HOW TO WRITE AN AUSTRALIAN NOVEL

You must have a squatter's daughter,
And a hero who has caught her
In the clutches of his passion like a vice ;
You must have a fat old squatter,
And must make him make things hotter
For the hero than the hero thinks is nice.

And the maiden must be lovely,
And the hero pick-and-shovelly—
Just at present—but a cultured kind of bloke,
With a college education
Who has hoofed it to the station,
And is sinkin' tanks and post-holes for a joke.

You must bring the two together
With remarks about the weather,
Let her watch him while he shovels out the dirt ;
'Till she thinks the post-hole digger
A romantic kind of figger—
Bar the patches in his moleskins and his shirt.

You may call the maiden Dora,
 And must work the native flora
 And the fauna in your tale for all they're worth ;
 And a suitable location
 For her fat old father's station
 May be anywhere 'twixt Narrabri and Perth.

You must intersperse the wattle,
 And the tree they call the "bottle"—
 You must weave 'em in the fabric of your tale—
 Better have the "tall yapunyah,"
 And some salt-bush, and a "gunyah,"
 And a cove called "Dick" to drive the local
 mail.

As the story waxes duller
 Introduce some "local colour,"
 Which is usually understood to be
 Almost anything Australian,
 From a blear-eyed Bachanalian
 In a "shanty," to a parrot on a tree.

Have some shearers playin' "ante"—
 That is "poker"—in a shanty,
 And some pictures if they bust you with
 expense ;
 Have a drawin' of the station,
 And another illustration
 Of a carcase, with a crow upon a fence.

For—to be a bit digressive—
There is nothing so expressive
Of the sadness of our solitudes immense,
Or so tenderly appealing
To our sympathy and feeling
As a carcase, and a crow upon a fence.

There's a stage in novel making
(’Spite of all the care you’re taking),
When you get your story tangled in a knot,
And you lack the inspiration
To create a situation
For the clear elucidation of your plot.

Then your characters get cranky,
And to stop their hanky-panky
Takes the patience of a literary Job;
And to analyse their notions,
And their feelin’s and emotions
You must pick their souls to pieces with a probe.

Very aggravating features
Have these brain-created creatures,
And it’s hard to make ’em do the things they
ought;
And to keep ’em in their places,
And to make ’em show their paces
Takes a barrow-load of patience and of thought.

Every novelist discovers
 That the management of lovers
 Is as hard as breaking milkers to the bail ;
 And it's worse than "tailin' weaners,"¹
 And controllin' their demeanours,
 To conduct a pair of lovers through a tale.

Though the maid may like the hero,
 She may sink his hopes to zero
 By pretending his devotedness to flout,
 For the maiden, though quite nicey,
 May be rather Wenham-icy,
 And it's up to *you* to go and thaw her out.

To attain this consummation,
 In a bath of perspiration,
 And profanity, the wretched writer gropes ;
 Still there's ways and means to do it,
 If the writer only knew it,
 And were up to all the literary ropes.

When you've made each lover spooney
 — On the other, and as looney,
 As a self-respectin' lover ought to be,
 Why, as author, your vocation
 Is to force a declaration
 Of their feelin's for each other—do you see?

¹ Looking after young stock in unfenced country.

You can do this at your leisure,
At your sovereign will and pleasure,
And by any sort of methods you may know,
Make him ill, and let her nurse him,
Make her fat old father curse him
Till the maiden ups and gives away the show.

Better still, and much more thrilling,
Set the gallant hero killing,
In her presence, twenty foot of carpet snake.
Let the "light of battle" glitter
While he's jabbing at the critter
In a most convincing manner with a stake.

While the hero's eyes are gleaming
With the "battle-light," and beaming,
While his raiment with the slaughtered serpent
reeks,
In hysterics growing bolder,
She should flop upon his shoulder
In an ecstasy of gratitude and squeaks.

After that it's easy sailing
For your goose-quill—not entailing
Any struggle of an energetic sort;
While the maiden's mood is melting,
And while Cupid's shafts are pelting,
You can drag your post-hole digger into port.

When his luck is just beginning,
And while Fortune's wheel is spinning,
You can give it half a dozen extra twirls ;
Though despised, and underrated,
You can prove the bloke's related
To a lot of blooming Marquises and Earls.

In the last concluding pages
Of the novel's later stages
Get the squatter in the clutches of the Bank ;
Have him rescued in the sequel
By the man who's now his equal—
That's the bloke who sunk his post-holes, and
his tank.

Rope the man and maid together
And come in out of the weather,
Take a rest, and light your pipe, and ring the
bell ;
Give your readers love and passion,
And, as morals ain't the fashion,
Why, the less you preach, the more your book
will sell.

THE SUFFRAGETTE

WE'RE a highly favoured nation,
And we've got our share of pubs,
And no man-destroying mammals
Roam our forests or our scrubs.
We've got wallabies and wombats,
We've the platypus, the flea,
And an anthropoid arrangement
Which they call a "C.M.G."

Yes, we've wallabies et. cet.,
And some others we forget,
But we hav'n't got the creature
Which they call the "suffragette."

She's as wily as a weasel,
She's as vicious as a stoat,
And she's madder than a monkey
'Cos she hasn't got a vote ;
She's as limber as a leopard,
She's as vain as a coquette,
And she loves a lively shindy,
Does the saucy suffragette.

Though she isn't in our set,
We would like one for a pet,
But we fear our lawful missus
Might say things one would regret.

She's a discontented creature,
And she's always in a fret,
'Cos her "rights" are not acknowledged
In the Government Gazette ;
For, that neither Bill nor Thomas
Can give points to Sue or Bet
Is the absolute conviction
Of the London suffragette.

And she smokes her cigarette,
Snaps her eyes of blue or jet,
While she brandishes her brolly
Like a Horse Marine cadet.

Then the frantic suffragette—
Quite ignoring etiquette—
Charges magistrates and bobbies
With a brolly dripping wet,
And a politician lately
Had to hump himself and get
Down a dark and winding stairway
To escape the suffragette.

You may very safely bet
There's a vacancy to let
In the cracked and crazy cranium
Of the silly suffragette.

She is not among our fauna—
And of gratitude a debt
For this blessing we are owing—
But she's very often met
In the wilds of Western London,
Where the bobby spreads his net,
With much patience and discretion,
To ensnare the suffragette.

Oh, the awful suffragette !
Let's be thankful that as yet
We've not seen that strange creation
Which they call the suffragette.

A BUSINESS PROPOSAL

(TO EVA)

THE Wall Street man is hard to beat,
He's up to every trick and wile,
And oft he corners wool or wheat,
And sometimes makes a goodly pile.

I covet not his golden hoard,
His loud attire, his jargon strange—
I'd rather sit upon the Board
Of Daniel Cupid's Stock Exchange.

If on that Board I ever get
I'll really struggle good and hard
To scoop and gather in my net
All "preference shares" in your regard.

To every trick I will resort,
And practise all the Wall Street wiles
To sell your other lovers "short"
And make a "corner" in your smiles.

Of Cupid's stock I hold, my dear,
Enough — though "bears" may growl and
grump—
To trade on "margins" for a year,
And never fear that love might "slump."

Oh! could we but "combine," sweet maid,
And "pool our stock," and form a "trust,"
Ah! then we need not feel afraid
Though Cupid's Bank itself should bust.

In fact should Cupid bankrupt be,
And have to pawn shafts, wings, and bow,
It would be up to you and me
To take the little god in tow.

With wealth like ours, in such event,
It would become our duty plain,
To lend him some at three per cent.—
And put him on his legs again.

NURSERY RHYMES FOR INFANT PASTORALISTS

THE present writer has often deplored the scarcity of really suitable books for Australian children—both prose and verse—and, with regard to the latter, especially, he has observed that the talented authors of “Old Mother Hubbard,” and “Sing a Song of Sixpence,” etc., have in modern times had but few and exceedingly feeble successors. He has, therefore, sought in a humble way to supply what may be truthfully described as a long-felt want, and, taking the classic nursery rhymes of our childhood as a model or basis, he has endeavoured to adapt them to the requirements of the present age and a pastoral country: also, while striving to preserve the purity of thought, and high moral tone which characterise such classical masterpieces as “Baa, Baa, Black Sheep,” an effort has been made to beguile the infant mind with realistic situations, and local colour, in artful combination with elementary information about finance and station management.

The attention of parents and guardians in pastoral districts is respectfully invited to the

following examples of the results of this experiment :—

Sing a song of saltbush,
Sandy-blight an' drought,
Forty thousand weaners
Slowly pegging out.

Start 'em on the stock-route,
Brand 'em with a "T";
Isn't that a pretty sight
To show a mortgagee?

Squatter king in sheep-yard
Counting out his stock;
Missus down in Sydney
Doin' of "the block."

All the station blacks say,
"Boss, it's plurry hot!"
'Long comes the mortgagee,
An' cops the bloomin' lot!

* * * * *

See, saw, process of law,
The station must have a new master;
This one makes but a penny a day
'Cos wool won't grow any faster.

* * * * *

Hicketty, spicketty (same old wheeze),
Sheep grew wool for mortgagees.
Mortgagees came every day:
They grew rich, while I grew—*grey*!

* * * * *

Baa, baa, black sheep,
 Have you any wool?
 Yes, sir, oh yes, sir! three bales full.
 One for the master, who grows so lean
 and lank;
 None for the mistress,
 But *two* for the Bank!

* * * * *

Dickery, dickery, dock;
 The ticks are in the stock!
 If not got out I'm up the spout,
 As sure as a Dutchman's clock!

* * * * *

Little Jack Horner
 Made a snug "corner"
 In wool when the weather was dry:
 He bought wool of all sorts,
 And, when squeezing the "shorts,"
 Said, "What a smart boy am I!"

* * * * *

Little Bo-Peep she lost her sheep—
 Perplexing situation!—
 But her plans she foxed, for they might be
 "boxed"¹
 With those of a neighb'ring station.

¹ When sheep belonging to different owners become mixed together they are said to be "boxed," and the process of separating them is called "drafting."

With dauntless nerves, on stock Reserves
She sought her blinded bleaters,
But her poor little eyes got bunged with flies,
And little black scrub-muskeeters.

Little Bo-Peep commenced to weep,
And worry about her losses ;
She feared disgrace, and she dared not face
The peppery station bosses.

Little Bo-Peep fell fast asleep,
And dreamt she'd got them yarded
In a snug little nook, so she dropped her crook,
For her progress it retarded.

Then little Bo-Peep she sought her sheep
On the neighbours' Improvement Leases :
She found 'em (how hard !) in another chap's
yard,
With his tar-brand on their fleeces !

* * * * *

Just one more—

Simple Simon met a dry man
On a saltbush plain ;
Said Simple Simon to the dry man,
“ D'jer think it's goin' ter rain ? ”

Said the dry man to Simple Simon,
“ Though the sky is o'ercast,
P'raps it will, an' p'raps it won't,
An' that's my bloomin' forecast ! ”

WHEN FATHER SNORES IN CHURCH

(BY GRAMPUS, JUNIOR)

WHEN father snores in church all other sounds
Are stifled by the loud crescendo tones :
The quiet dead, beneath their verdant mounds
Outside, awake in fear, with rattling bones,
When father snores in church.

When father snores in church it's like, O my !
A tropic cyclone out upon the loose ;
Hysteric females squirm, and sob, and cry,
'Cos with their nerves it plays the very (d)juce,
When father snores in church.

When father snores in church the flippant smile,
The priest turns pale, the verger frowns
reproof ;
The nasal thunder rumbles through the aisle,
And rattles up the rafters in the roof,
When father snores in church.

When father snores in church you'd think there
was

A lion in the vestry roarin' hard ;
The organist gets mad as cats because
His diapason can't be heard a yard,

When father snores in church.

When father snores in church it's like a band

That's all bassoon and drum—a horrid vamp
Of tortured tones—then mother takes a hand

And bangs him in the brisket with her gamp,

When father snores in church.

THE CINEMATOGRAPH FIEND

A Japanese photographer was taking a cinematograph picture of the reception of the late Prince Ito, Japanese Resident General in Korea at Harbin, on the 26th October 1909, wher the assassination took place, and the operator actually cinematographed the murder.

The photographer has sold the film upon which the assassination is pictured for £1,500.—*Daily Paper*.

THERE'S a cove as wants suppressin'—

Boilin' down's too good by 'alf—

'E's the bloke wot's always messin'

With a Cinematograph.

'E's most awful pertinacious,

An' 'e ain't no sort o' use

(Wish I knew a efficacious

Way of cookin' of 'is goose).

'E's for everlastin' tryin'

Someone else to get before,

Nothin's sacred from 'is pryin'

From a weddin' to a war.

Where the bullets hiss an' hurtle,
An' where gapin' wounds are seen
'E goes snappin' like a turtle
For the films of 'is machine.

Groups of sunstruck, shipwrecked sailors,
Bleary eyed upon a raft,
Kings an' cads, and dukes an' tailors
All get cinematographed.

When two pugs of note an' status
Peels an' serves the "stoush" around
With 'is films an' apparatus
'E gets early on the ground.

Snaps their classic mugs an' noses
For the public to adore,
An' their attitudes an' poses,
And 'e *photergraphs the gore!*

Every scene that's grave or giddy,
Well, 'is records 'its it off,
From the christenin' of a kiddy
To the plantin' of a toff:

From a lot of women sportin'
In the breakers for a lark,
To a fancy-bloke a-courtin'
Of 'is donah in the park:

From a 'igh church confirmation,
With a Bishop on the job,
To the crool assassination
Of an Asiatic nob.

For, you can't be stabbed or dyin'
From a wallop with a stick
But the bloke 'e comes a-tryin'
For to snap your final kick.

When the Judgment Day is dawnin',
When the final word is said,
When the churchyards take to yawnin',
An' to lettin' loose the dead,

When the last loud trump is tootin'—
Well, there ain't no call to laugh—
'E'll be there as sure as shootin'
With 'is cinematograph.

THE MODEL, MODERN CABINET MINISTER

(WRITTEN FOR THE SYDNEY *BULLETIN* WITH
APOLOGIES TO THE LATE W. S. GILBERT)

I AM a man of multiform accomplishments and
mystery,
You'll scarcely find my prototype in new or
ancient history.
Although my enemies have tried all manner of
preventatives,
I've got to be a leader in the 'Ouse of Represent-
atives.

On me a vote of censure has effects no more
emphatical,
Than water on the backs of ducks or other birds
aquatical,
In fact in all diplomacy 'mong friends or parties
sinister
I am most unmistakeably a model, modern
Minister.

I hav'n't any scruples which a cove could call
young-ladyish,

My grammar's bad, my principles are shadowy
and shadyish,

But I can crush an obstacle that's nearly insur-
mountable,

And keep in office in a way that's almost
unaccountable.

My manner is ambiguous, inscrutable, jesuitical,
My equal you will scarcely find among the
push political,

And in a matter where a smile may mask a
purpose sinister

I am the modern model of a meretricious
Minister.

My views change colour quicker than an African
chameleon ;

In verbiage I'm able to pile Ossa on to Pelion.

When I can make a speech without misplacing
every aspirate,

And making slips in grammar calculated to
exasperate

The shade of Lindley Murray, or that mighty
Lexicographer,

Sam Johnson, or that bigoted old buffer, his
biographer,

Why, men will think, in spite of foes who hostile
are and sinister,

That I'm a matchless masterpiece, and model,
modern Minister.

A POLITICAL BALLAD

(A LA PATIENCE)

(ORIGINALLY WRITTEN FOR SYDNEY *BULLETIN*)

If you're anxious for to shine
In the Legislative line
As a model M.L.A.¹
You must get up sundry facts
With respect to certain Acts
In a desultory kind of way :
You need not have been to college,
Or possess a lot of knowledge,
Or be cultured or refined—
You can represent the nation
Without any education,
Or a particle of what's called mind.

And every one will say,
When you ope' your mouth to bray,
If he knows so little and can say so much
On a matter that's obscure to me,
Why, what a preternaturally wise old ass
This M.L.A. must be !

¹ Member of Legislative Assembly.

You must say you've got a "mission,"
You must join the Opposition,
And oppose the Premier's sway ;
You must combat every measure
For expending public treasure
In a most determined way :
You must sit up late o' nights
Just to vindicate the rights
Of the persecuted working-man ;
With a clique you must be banded
To protect the 'orny-'anded,
And the 'ard-worked artisan ;

And every one will say
Of this model M.L.A.
If he's so energetic for a lot of working men
Who are nobody to you or me,
Why, what a disinterested grand old bloke
This M.L.A. must be !

Don't imagine for a second
That much eloquence is reckoned
Very prevalent amongst M.P.'s ;
If you catch the Speaker's optic
You may jabber Dutch, or Coptic,
Or any kind of rot you please.
A speech to be effective
Ought to bristle with invective,
And it's just as well perhaps to state
That you really needn't worry
To invest in Lindley Murray
For he's pretty nearly out of date ;

And every one will say
As they read your speech next day,
With the grammar all corrected and the slang
cut out,
And not a single great big "D,"
Why, what a deliciously refined old bird
This M.L.A. must be !

HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP "*INSOLVENT*"

(THE MODERN PHANTOM SHIP)¹

OH ! we love to read the legends
Of the ancient sailor bloke
With his pigtail and his cutlas,
And his heart of solid oak :

We delight in tales of "boarders"—
Not the sort who vainly gnash
Worn-out molars in their efforts
To disintegrate their hash—

But those buccaneering tars who
Brought the Spaniard to his knees,
When yard-arms were lashed together,
And when Drake was on the seas—

For, to sack a Spanish city
Was quite etiquette, you know,
For a fashionable pirate
Of three hundred years ago.

¹ Concerning the Dreadnought which it was recently rumoured Australia was about to present to Great Britain.

But this buccaneering person,
Though his pluck was hard to beat,
Was as full of superstition
As an egg is full of meat.

And the sweat of terror gathered
On his corrugated brow
If he saw the *Flying Dutchman*
Looming large upon his bow.

Now, though Vanderdecken's vessel—
Once a harbinger of woe—
Has retreated to the limbo
Where most superstitions go,

And the Dutchman, in his haven
'Mid the shadows of the past,
Doesn't wreck the nervous system
Of the man before the mast,

Still (and p'r'aps it's just as well to
Give the modern tar the tip)
There's another phantom vessel
Gettin' ready on the "slip"—

One more horror to be added
To the terrors of the seas,
Quite transcending all the bogies
Which are born of toasted cheese—

HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP "*INSOLVENT*" 137

And the Dutchman won't be in it
As a spook of high degree
When Australia's Phantom Dreadnought
Gets her keel upon the sea.

She's a dandy craft, for certain,
Built of promises and hopes ;
She'll have strings of lies for cordage,
And for cables, and for ropes.

She will be, it's been asserted,
Quite the queerest ship that floats,
For, while all her flags and ensigns
Will be promissory notes,

If they jerk her signal-halyards
As she wallows in the seas,
I.O.U's, instead of bunting,
Will be flapping in the breeze !

Then—well just by way of ballast—
We have recently been told,
She'll have quite a heavy mortgage
Under hatches in her hold.

And, as drunkenly, she wobbles
On each billow's crested ridge,
Moss and Cohen will be strutting
"In possession" on her bridge.

She'll be christened the "*Insolvent*,"
For, it's positively true,
She'll be built of money borrowed
From the European Jew.

And the ocean-going public,
Will be bound to get a shock
When this grim and grisly phantom
Has been floated out of dock.

If the tars of Drake and Hawkins
Had encountered such a ship
They'd have got the hump, the horrors,
And the palsy, and the pip.

And all other spooks and bogies
Can go home and go to sleep
When the battle-ship *Insolvent*
Takes to ploughin' up the deep.

IS WOMAN A FAILURE?

At a conference of the Australian Natives' Association recently a Mr Q——, referring to feminine members of the Association, stated that he considered women were a failure, and an incubus on the Association.

MR Q——, you've been a-hurtin'
Of our feelin's by assertin'
That a woman (would we had one on our lap !)
Is a failure and an incu-
Bus, excuse us if we think you
Wus than any Heathen Chinaman or Jap.

Such a bald assertion vexes :
Such a libel on "the sex" is
Quite sufficient to upset us from our perch,
For, we've always worshipped women
Walkin', dancin', shoppin', swimmin',
Laughin', weepin', smilin', snorin', and in
church.

When a chump like Q—— thus poses
As a critic (Holy Moses !)
Of the sex for which such deep regard we feel,
By the lips of Blanch—or Rosa—
We grow doubtful if he knows a
Pretty woman from a walrus or a seal.

Give us truth, for, lo! we crave it,
Let him state per affidavit,
Duly witnessed by a qualified J.P.,
Or by solemn affirmation,
Without mental reservation,
Has he ever taken one upon his knee?

Let him say, without evasion,
If he ever on occasion
(We are really only seeking for the truth)
Has thus held a willing damsel,
Or some coy and pouting ma'mselle,
And has found her such an "incubus," forsooth!

Let him say, for there's no knowing,
If he's taken girls out rowing
When the moon has shone resplendent in the
sky,
If in "hansom," or in boat, or
In a taxicab, or motor
He has taken 'em to Manly on the sly.

Has he ever fairly chased 'em?
Has he caught 'em, and embraced 'em?
Has he sampled any nectar from their lips?
Has he seen 'em in the breakers?
Even Pharisees and Quakers
Love to watch the graceful curving of their hips.

When we see injustice meted
Out to woman we grow heated,
And we query Q——'s most questionable taste.
She's no failure, Oh ! my brother,
As a wife, or as a mother,
Or a girl with *someone's* arm around her waist.

All Q——'s views are topsy-turvy,
If her form, so nice and curvy,
To his bosom he were privileged to press,
He'd admit, without negation,
That a girl, in her vocation
As a sweetheart, is a positive success.

Go to, Q——, we do beseech you
Get some pretty girl to teach you
How to kiss her as a damsel should be kissed ;
Study woman more completely,
In the abstract and concretely,
For you've really no idea what you've missed.

SOME PREVAILING DELUSIONS

THERE are people, and their number is immense,
Who half-consciously persist in some pretence,
 Some preposterous delusion,
 To the practical exclusion,
Of the cold and searching light of common-sense.

Bar these strange hallucinations, known as
 “rats,”

They are often level-headed, yes, and that's
 Just what makes their cases sadder,
 For, in certain ways they're madder
Than the maddest manufacturer of hats.

There's a wretched little bounder of a clerk—
Throws a shadow like a paling from a park—
 He's been practising ju-jitsu,
 But suppose the beggar hits you
On the smeller, why, it wouldn't leave a mark.

He has read the books of great athletic cranks,
'Till he fancies he will shortly join their ranks,
 And he takes a pride in showing,
 How the muscles have been growing
On his arms, and on his weedy little shanks.

But the muscle which he fancies is so hard
Is as plastic as a bladder full of lard ;
 Still no force on earth could loose him
 From delusion, or induce him
His belief that he's a Sandow to discard.

There's a cove who thinks he ought to make a
 pot
As a tenor, which he certainly is not ;
 Of his " glottis " he discourses,
 And he concentrates his forces
To develop what he really hasn't got.

Oh ! the scientific voice-producing pest !
How persistently he robs us of our rest ;
 He's convinced his scale chromatic
 Will be highly operatic
When he learns the way to get it off his chest.

How we hate him, though his relatives applaud
When he sings " My pretty Jane "—or is it
 Maud ?

 As a man he may be blameless
 As an artist he's a shameless
And a perfectly unmitigated fraud.

There's another fraud—one meets him when one
 goes
Where the restless tide of ocean ebbs and flows—
 He's the youth the girls admire
 For his nautical attire
And the bogus navy buttons on his clothes.

And he ogles all the women as they pass,
And he looks at all the shipping through a
glass ;

Talks of schooner, yawl, and cutter
With affected drawl and stutter
'Till a landsman even knows that he's an ass.

Of the " focsle " slang he uses quite a heap,
And he calls it " caulking " when he goes to
sleep ;

Talks of berthing, and of docking
'Till you'd fancy he's been rocking
From his childhood in the cradle of the deep.

But his skin by ocean breeze was never tanned,
And he never held a quadrant in his hand,
And the bounder (spite his boundings)
Never ventures out of soundings—
He'd be sea-sick half a mile away from land.

What's the reason?—Oh ! we've sought it near
and far—

Why such people ain't contented as they are ?
Why must Thompson, who's a tailor,
Go pretending he's a sailor.
Or a Sandow, or an operatic star ?

But this passion for pretence is not confined
To the dark deceitful bosoms of mankind ;
It enthralls that sex, unhidden
Which, for reasons that are hidden,
Sews the buttons of its garments on behind.

For the Gibson-girl is swarming everywhere,
And she's generally angular and spare,
 With a hard and bony shoulder,
 And she's infinitely older
Than she usually chooses to declare.

And she'd really try the patience of a saint—
If you said she's not a Gibson-girl she'd faint—
 You may argue, you may reason,
 Either in or out of season,
But you never could convince her that she ain't.

Then the offices of Theatres are packed
With the women who imagine they can act,
 And the managers get scotty,
 And eventually "dotty,"
And retire to asylums for the cracked.

There, we really hope we've given no offence,
But we badly want the light of common-sense
 Just to shed a passing glimmer
 O'er the pathway of the swimmer
In this ocean of unlimited pretence.

OUR MOTHER

WE were little limbs of Satin—brother Jim, and
Bill, and me,
In much miscellaneous mischief we were mates;
We constructed “flying-horses,” put the salt in
peoples’ tea,
And we swung upon forbidden garden gates.

We got mud upon our faces, and our clothes
we’d often stain
By an unexpected header in a ditch,
Then our mother wrote her sentiments, and wrote
’em very plain,
On our tender little haunches with a switch.

Oh ! that hazel-wand of mother’s, like the sword
of Damocles,
Hung suspended o’er our haunches like a trap;
But a single hair upheld it, and we trembled at
the knees,
For we knew that hairs are liable to snap.

And we always knew the moment for the bursting of the storm,
For the muscles of her fingers used to twitch,
And we knew that when the cyclone wrapped a writhing little form,
There'd be mother in the centre, with a switch.

There was father in the background with a slipper or a strap,
But it took a lot to drag him from his den,
And we weren't afraid of father, and we didn't care a rap
For the lickings that he gave us now and then.

For the dad was slow and heavy, and no artist's hand had he,
And our panic never rose to such a pitch,
As when mother played sonatas in a complicated key,
Full of sharps and accidentals, with a switch.

We were always out at elbows, and she stitched from morn till night,
And our pants were often drydocked for repairs;
And we never had a notion, as we saw her hair grow white,
That 'twas we who gave her all her silver hairs.

Oh ! the mother of our childhood, she will never
come again ;

How we used to watch her busy fingers stitch ;
When our lives were just like sandwiches of
happiness and pain,

It was she supplied the mustard—with a
switch.

She was kind and she was loving—when we
happened to be good,

Which was now and then—say, once or twice
a year—

We were hardened little cusses, and we never
understood

If we sometimes saw her brush away a tear.

She was one among a thousand, and though
quite unknown to Fame,

In her temple she's deserving of a niche,
As the model of a brisk and a domesticated
dame,

And a conscientious artist with a switch.

But her hand grew weak and feeble, and before
we knew her worth,

She was wafted up to meet a better fate ;
And they told us in a whisper that she'd left her
home on earth

For a brighter and a happier estate.

Now we've left those days behind us—what a
time ago it seems ;

And we're portly, and we're prosperous, and
rich,

And, though mother's gone to Heaven, still she
visits us in dreams,

And her spirit hovers o'er us with a switch.

If there's any little seraphs in that happier estate

Who appear to be seraphic, but who ain't,

If they ever get a-swingin' on the white and
pearly gate,

Why, then mother will attend to their
complaint.

And I know that mother's fingers will uncon-
sciously contract,

In the spasm of that well remembered twitch ;

They'll be sad and sorry seraphs if detected in
the act,

And if mother gets behind 'em with a switch.

THE POLITICIAN

I WOULD write a disquisition
On the wily politician
(Of his presence may we never be bereft),
Will you kindly tune the lyre,
And make room around the fire,
And just give the muse a chance to swing her
left.

'Tis a subject most entrancing,
And, while Pegasus is prancing,
We would like to give a little hint or two,
How to tell in all sincerity,
With discriminating clearness,
The pretending politician from the true.

A successful politician,
Wants an even disposition,
For he has to take the ha'pence plus the kicks :
Yes, but no one but a noodle
Thinks that that's the whole caboodle
Of the politician's little bag of tricks.

If a man would don the ermine
It behoves him to determine
If he's gifted with the makin's of a judge :
So the would-be politician
Ought to find out if his mission
Is the veritable article, or—fudge.

If you want to raise the curtain,
And discover if for certain
You were born beneath the politician's star,
You must take your soul to pieces,
You must iron out the creases,
And discover what the indications are.

You must analyse 'em closely,
And, we may remark jocosely,
That you'd better see what principles you've
got,
And eliminate 'em quickly,
For most principles are prickly,
And in politics they're *principally* rot.

Say, you're plotting some new measure
For the public's good, and pleasure,
And, of course quite incidentally, your own.
It's a nuisance, while thus brooding,
To have principles intruding,
With a conscientious snuffle or a groan.

And it's very handicapping,
When the Opposition's napping,
And you see a chance to carry something through,
If a principle comes stalking,
Right across your path and balking
All the good you really fancied you might do.

If you've got the gift of jerking
Pleasing platitudes, and smirking
With a salad-oil-and-treacle sort of smile,
Why, you don't need a magician
To assure you that your mission
Is to scintillate in Parliament awhile.

If you've got divine afflatus,
You will soon acquire status,
When the out-works of the fortress have been
stormed ;
You may have to wade through mire—
You may even be a liar,
And a Legislator too—I've been informed.

Let's suppose that Mother Nature
Meant you for the legislature,
Still you'll find that there are many things to
learn,
You must be a bit persuasive,
And elusive, and evasive,
And be quite a lot of different things in turn.

To be insincere and specious,
And to be a bit facetious
When you're cornered, is an excellent device ;
You must have the serpent's flyness,
But the innocence and shyness
Of the dove you mus'n't have at any price.

There are lots of ways of showing,
And a hundred ways of knowing
If you're fit to join the Legislative's band,
In the service of the nation,
But the surest indication
Is an itching in the hollow of your hand ;

And, if any doubt should linger
Re the pointing of Fate's finger,
And your mission, oh ! be comforted and
calm ;
It's the best sign in creation
That you're called to serve the nation,
If you feel a titillation in your palm.

There, we've had our little flutter,
And we hope that what we utter
Won't be causing any seasoned M.L.A.,
Any conscientious twinges,
For we've only touched the fringes
Of the subject in a desultory way.

Let us sheath the inky dagger,
Yes, and tie our muse, and gag her,
And put Pegasus to "bye-bye," in his stall,
With "short-hobbles," and a "side-
line,"
And a well and truly tied line,
Fixed securely to a staple in the wall.

SOME CYNICAL SUGGESTIONS BY A SELF-MADE SINNER TO HIS SON

GLOOM and ennui are the bitterest foes of
Mankind, and against them he constantly
strives ;

Fain would I teach you how best to dispose of
The days and the minutes which make up
our lives.

It isn't good form to be too pessimistic
(Form should be perfect though morals be lax),
Slay each dull moment by methods artistic,
Never kill time with a club or an axe.

Heed not the voice of the dullard who pros—
Preaching the doctrine that pleasure's a crime—
If you *must* break the commandments of Moses
See that you only break one at a time.

Strut while you may on the stage of existence,
Carefully posing and playing your part,
Be an apostle of dogged persistence
Rather than slave to the canons of art.

Art is as long as a lane with no turning ;
Life, which is short as a ballet girl's skirt,
Chiefly consists of unsatisfied yearning,
Yearning which harrows the soul to its hurt.

Life is a garden which Death's hand encloses,
In it fair blossoms in clusters are hung,
Stretch forth both hands then and gather its
roses
While they are blushing, and while you are
young.

Youth can expand like a sun-flower and flourish
Strong in the strength of its forces divine ;
Age craves for viands which strengthen and
nourish,
Youth can exist upon kisses and wine.

Empty the cup while the rich wine is creaming,
Time will despoil you of all but the lees,
Age is a season of fatuous dreaming,
Fate locks her treasures, but youth holds the
keys.

When on Eve's daughters you lavish caresses
Never let one of them make you her thrall—
Binding you fast to her side with her tresses—
Safety's in numbers, make love to them all.

Hearts are but toys to be broken in pieces,
Girls were invented to flirt and to sew,
Never depend on one woman's caprices,
Always have two or three strings to your bow.

SOME CYNICAL SUGGESTIONS 157

Sip every pleasure, but keep your head level,
Let not one passion your senses enmesh,
Have an *entente cordial* with the Devil,
Keep on good terms with the world and the
flesh.

THE TIMES

It's a highly extravagant age :
We've arrived, it appears, at a stage
 When we most of us itch
 To keep pace with the rich
While receiving a "minimum wage."

It's an age of vain pomp and display,
And of idols with feet made of clay,
 While, without any gammon,
 The worship of Mammon
Prevails more and more every day.

There's a turbulent wave of unrest—
It bears us like corks on its crest—
 And the idle and wealthy,
 Whose tastes ain't too healthy,
Are setting the pace for the rest.

It's a time of deceit and pretence,
And the efforts we make are immense
 Just to give people grounds
 For believing we've pounds
While our pockets hold nothing but pence.

It's an era of bogus and sham ;
One may frequently meet, in a tram,
 With a sweet *ingénue*
 Of about forty-two—
She's a sheep masquerading as lamb.

It's a gay and a frivolous time ;
And—ignoring the truly sublime—
 Society stifles
 Its conscience with trifles
Alike without reason or rhyme.

Then, our wives and our daughters will swear
That they haven't got clothes fit to wear.

 Yet these poor little martyrs
 Wear *gems* (?) on their garters—
So some well-informed persons declare.

At our theatres, yes, and "the halls"
To the nude we are certainly thralls ;
 'Tis an era of lust—
 Too much shoulder and bust
Are on view in the "circle" and "stalls."

Once in Rome—many centuries back—
A great civilization went crack
 'Cos the bond-thralls of fashion,
 And folly, and passion
Couldn't keep the State coach on the track.

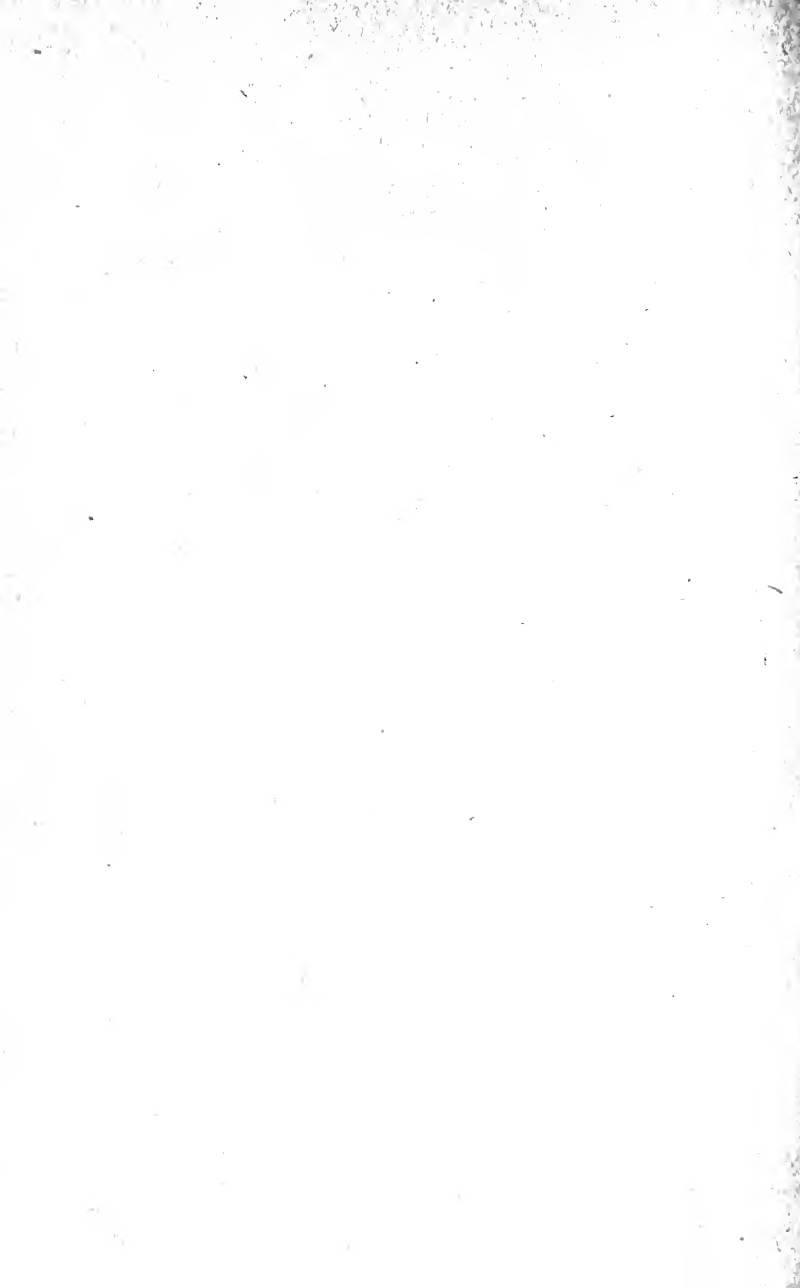
And to-day it's quite easy to see
That a similar slump there will be,
 For our system must smash
 With a similar crash
Which will bury us all in *débris*.

JIM

JIM's goin' to ride for the "Guineas,"
That's so, an' he'll win if he can—
Jim with the hands of a woman,
Jim with the heart of a man.
Big, rakin' chestnut he's ridin'—
Mare with a mouth like a file—
Jim ain't a Samson for muscle,
He ain't, but a dandy fur style.
Fine stamp o' mare, but a puller—
Regular borer an' strainer—
Pulled a lad outer the saddle—
She did—— I'm 'er trainer.

Jim's goin' to ride for the "Guineas"—
Trained to an ounce, an' all that—
Game as a pebble, but wasted—
Hasn't the strength of a cat.
The chestnut's a rakin', hard-bitten
She-devil, that wont keep the track,
An' Jim, with the strength of a kitten,
Well, just like a fly on her back.
Wish I'd a feather-weight jockey
As strong as a nine or ten stoner,
D—n him ! I'm broke if she loses
Yes, broke—— I'm 'er owner.

Jim's goin' to ride for the "Guineas"
To-day—'ow it blows from the west!
'Im that they've trained to a shadder—
'Im with a cold on 'is chest.
'Ow can 'e 'elp bein' sickly,
Wastin' a stone in a week?
As for them owners an' trainers,
They oughter be fined by the beak.
Wish 'ed quit racin' an' trainin',
Wish they'd a chosen some other,
Wish the big chestnut was stiffened,—
The brute!—— I'm Jim's mother.



OPINIONS OF THE PRESS ON "IRONBARK SPLINTERS"

This book has been favourably reviewed both by English and Australian Papers. Among the notices which have already appeared are the following:—

EXTRACT FROM RED PAGE OF THE SYDNEY
BULLETIN, 15TH FEBRUARY, 1906

"A cheaper edition of 'Ironbark Chips and Stock-whip Cracks,' by G. H. Gibson—a 'people's edition' at 1s.—that is the most attractive shillingsworth on to-day's market. Gibson was an earlier Australian humorist with a talent for racy verse and prose that has not often been matched lately. His *Bulletin* rhymes of 'Retrenchment,' 'My Mate Bill,' and 'A Ballad of Queensland' are cherished afar to this day; and the publishers were wrong to exclude the two former from the present edition. The paper and printing are generous; and all bush readers at least will want the book—one of the most original and characteristic of Australian literary performances."

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

"Mr G. Herbert Gibson has brought out in a new edition his clever and amusing book of Australian verses and sketches, published originally some few years ago with the title of 'Ironbark Chips and Stockwhip Cracks.' It is plentifully illustrated by Mr Spence and Mr Vincent, and altogether in this new form should be welcome to all that are not sworn foes to laughter."

SYDNEY DAILY TELEGRAPH

"We have received a short batch of sketches in prose and verse by G. Herbert Gibson, otherwise 'Ironbark,' of Sydney *Bulletin* fame.

"'Ironbark Chips' in its present form will, we should imagine, be popular. The rhymes are spirited and go with the sort of swing that seldom fails to catch the public ear."

SYDNEY BULLETIN (RED PAGE)

"Here in 'Ironbark Splinters' you have the real, old, genuine fully matured bush poems laid down a full decade ago and still called for at every bush pub in the Commonwealth.

"'Ironbark' brews a liquor that is ever palatable to bush palates.

"'My Mate Bill' is deservedly popular wherever the Australian language is spoken, and the picture of Bill drafting 'them goats and sheep' is as good as anything ever penned by 'Banjo' or 'Lawson.' 'Wanted, a Noah' lightly preaches a needed sermon, but most of the verses are true to the Author's modest label, the 'thistledown and cobwebs of Australian literature.'

"There is enough sunlit thistledown drifting through these rambling pages to ensure a warm welcome from outback to this genuine voice from the bush."

LONE HAND

"Some old friends turn up again in 'Ironbark Splinters from the Australian Bush.' The new verses show 'Ironbark' as bright and slick with his rhymes as ever. Not many of his successors can beat the easy narrative style and the humour of some of these pieces for recitation. 'Jones's Selection,' 'Going on the Land,' and 'The Blindin', Blazin' West,' are as good as anything of their kind, and the whole contents will amuse any reader in town or outback."

SCOTSMAN

"Light, humorous, rollicking, easy in rhythm and true to the more amusing aspects of life and character as seen in the Australian Bush. Mr Gibson's new book of verses will please any one who likes catchy work in rhymes and metre. In older countries verse of this kind is often too much refined.

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"'Ironbark Splinters,' G. Herbert Gibson, a delightful collection of verse devoted principally to the realities and fascination of the Australian bush. To those who know Australia—the inner Australia—this book will appeal even more than to the casual reader who seeks only pastime. The volume breathes the breath of the great bush, and to one who has been through it all brings to mind memories of the camp fire and all the interesting life of 'Out back.' Pathos and humour are here mingled, and withal there is the genuine atmosphere of life in the great open spaces of Australia."

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THE TIMES

"Mr Gibson runs off light and topical rhymes, with a love for the joggety metres into which Colonial poets run so easily."

MORNING POST

"When we learn that many of the pieces in Mr Gibson's book have already appeared in the *Sydney Bulletin*, we know that his local colouring will wash, that his language is frequent and free, that his best strokes of humour resemble the third or fourth ball in an over by Dr Hordern. He might perhaps be defined as a Gilbert of the 'Back Blocks,' such is the versatility of his versification, and so inexhaustible is his sense of the incongruous."

DAILY CHRONICLE

"Mr Gibson is essentially a 'bush bard' of the topical sort, and a live vigorous mind he brings into play. In his 'Nursery Rhymes for Infant Pastoralists' what a world of irony is expressed in the following brief parody:—

'Baa, baa, black sheep
Have you any wool?
Yes, Sir, Oh yes, Sir, three bales full.
One for the master, who grows so lean and lank;
None for the mistress,
But TWO for the Bank!'

"One is grateful for the 'cute' little glimpses Mr Gibson gives us of Australian conditions."

*"UNITED EMPIRE"—ROYAL COLONIAL
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"The author has a decided faculty for gripping his reader. His command of verse and keen appreciation of humour compel attention. Few readers with a turn for wit or satire will cast aside Mr Gibson's verses, for they are decidedly clever."

SYDNEY MAIL

"The many good things of which 'Ironbark Splinters' is made up will be appreciated by most Australian readers."

THE ADELAIDE REGISTER

"The author has remarkable facility in stringing rhymes."

SYDNEY STOCK AND STATION JOURNAL

"The writer of this book knows his bush about as well as any man I ever came across. 'Ironbark' never descends to halting poetry. It is all good jingle, and is as full of laughter and tears as the best literature in the world."

SYDNEY DAILY TELEGRAPH

"This is really popular verse of the kind that is sure to be welcomed in the shearing sheds and round the camp fires. It is easy to see that the Author writes of matters of which he has personal knowledge."

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